

# PRIVATE JUDGMENT

DEFENDED;

OR,

The Lawfulness and Duty of refusing Obedience to the highest of Church Judicatures, when their Commands are judged unlawful, asserted and vindicated.

In which the People's *Divine Right* to elect their Pastors is briefly evidenced; also, the Sin of PATRONS in presenting, and of PREACHERS and MINISTERS in accepting PRESENTATIONS, while the Congregation doth not consent, is clearly manifested.

In sundry DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

TIMOTHEUS and IRENEUS Senior.

HALES on Schism, p. 4. "When either false or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for Truth, or Acts, either unlawful or ministering just Scruple, are required of us to be performed; in such Cases, Consent were Conspiracy, and open Contestation is not Faction or Schism, but due Christian Animosity."

Confession of Faith, Chap. 20. Sect. 2. "The requiring an IMPLICITE FAITH, and an absolute and BLIND Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also."

Acts iv. 19. *Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

EDINBURGH;

Printed by THOMAS LUMSDEN and COMPANY;

Sold at their Printing-house in the Fishmarket, 1752.

(Price 1 *sh.* 6 *d.*)



The following *ERRATA* may be thus corrected,

Page 51, Line 6, for *Lainer* read *Lainez*.

P. 68, L. 9, add the Word *it* before the Word *is*.

P. 84, L. 30, for *Judicature* read *Judicatures*.

P. 85, L. 3, for *Jenky* read *Jenkyn*.

P. 87, L. 5, for *Law* read *saw*.

P. 120, L. 8, for *C* in sundry Copies, read  
*Quumque*.

P. 142, Line 28, *For* *Walls*



W  
pish  
super  
agre  
liged  
Dis  
vast  
prio  
the  
to b  
by  
Art  
hov  
sequ  
For  
Art  
fall  
tur  
Tr  
the  
lish  
ano  
Ch  
me  
for  
ha  
th  
A  
co  
an  
al  
OL

# TO THE READER.

**W**HEREAS at this Day there seems to be a mighty Inclination in many to espouse that Popish Principle of *blind Obedience* to the Injunctions of superior Church Judicatures, whether we can see them agreeable to the Divine Law or not, as if we were obliged to give up with our *Judgment of Discretion* upon *Discretion* to our Superiors: This to me is a Matter of vast Moment. Some have said, *That Day in which the private Judgment of Discretion is destroyed, that Day the Protestant Religion dies.* Others have thought this to be what Luther said of the Doctrine of Justification by a Surety's *imputed Righteousness*, namely, to be *Articulus stantis & cadentis Ecclesiæ.* And surely, however small it may seem in Appearance, yet by Consequence it may be said to be of no less Importance: For tho' no Comparison is to be made between that *Article* and the present Case; yet if we must stand or fall by the Determinations of the highest Church Judicatures, being made up of fallible Men, Who can tell what Truths they may not be left to deny, or what Errors they may not be left to espouse, and enjoin to be published for certain Truths? Whatever we are to hope and pray for, yet I know of no absolute Security the Church of *Scotland* hath against such dreadful Apostasy, more than had the once famous *Asian Churches*, and formerly flourishing Church of *Rome.* All who stand have need to take heed lest they fall.

Here you see I have adduced sundry Authorities from the Learned and Judicious: Not as if I thought bare Authority to be an Argument of sufficient Weight for confirming a Truth; yet these are enough to vindicate an Author from the Charge of *Novelty*, from the Charge also of *Singularity*; and many Times the Reasons given

in such Citations are of Use to confirm the Argument, as perhaps they may be of Influence with some Readers, to make them weigh with more Deliberation what is advanced.

I own there is what some term a *Judgment of Ministerial Instruction*, which belongs to Pastors; and this both as they sit in Church Judicatures, and as, in the Course of their Ministry, they instruct the People of their Charge: And we are obliged to hearken to all their Instructions; obeying all their Commands, when agreeable to the Divine Law. But we are never to believe them with *implicite Faith*, nor obey them with *blind Obedience*, or without proving all they teach or command by the Touchstone of the unerring Rule of God's Word. If they teach or command what is evil, we are expressly discharged to believe or obey them, *Prov. xix. 27.*

Violent Settlements being in a great Measure *origo mali*, the corrupt Fountain whence at this Day our Divisions and other Maladies do flow, I judged it Duty to testify against them in sundry Places of the following Dialogues. Here perhaps it will be said, What can Judicatures do but settle upon *Presentations*, while the Law is so express for them? Can we fly in the Face of the Law, and so provoke the Legislature to bind the Yoke of Patronages with greater Rigour upon us? Or, if Church Judicatures would settle the Man whom the People are for, where shall the Minister have a Stipend, if settled without the Patron's *Presentation*?

*Answer*, If it be as some tell us, there is a Rule in the Common Law of England, "That if any Statute be made contrary to the Law of God, it is null and void;" then I cannot help thinking this of Patronages is such a Statute. 2. Tho' since the Reformation *Patronages* still had Law for them till 1649, yet they were never so in force, as that the Church of Scotland settled Ministers *renitente & contradicente Ecclesia*, or over the Belly of Congregations. The great Mr. *Alexander Henderson* gives Testimony to this in his little *Treatise of the Government and Order of the Church of Scotland*.



### To the Reader.

So the Author of that nervous Piece, entitled, *Grange or Schemists on Presentations*, published 1737, \* where the Author speaking of Patronages, says, "But in no Time have Presbyterians been obliged to submit absolutely to this Hardship, tho' they had always Dissculties and Contentions about it." After the last *Act* for Patronages, for several Years all Patrons, thro' a just Sense of our Principles and Objections against the said *Act*, declined giving *Presentations*: And afterwards when *Acceptance* was required by the Law 1719, and *Presentations* began to be given, few or no Probationers would accept, unless conditionally: But now alas we are like, tamely and without Necessity, to give up with this *Presbyterian Principle*. At first when *Presentations* came to be offered to Presbyteries, they had a Scruple so much as to read them: And when our Friends in Parliament 1719 had got that Clause adjected to the *Act* for Patronages, namely, that the *Presentee* was to declare his *Acceptance*, &c. it was thought no *Presbyterian* would accept; yet at this Day we are so far gone back, that some had the Confidence (it deserves a worse Name) before our General Assembly, to plead their *Acceptance* of the *Presentation*, as an Argument for their being settled thereon. And it is to be regreted that some, who in our Assemblies used in pleading to affirm, better a Kirk should ly vacant, was it for seven Years, than that a Minister should be thrust in upon a Congregation *invito grege*, or against their Will; yet now they are ready to plead for Settlements upon little more than bare *Presentations*.

As for our being compelled to settle barely upon them, I hope as long as our Gracious Sovereign King *George* sways the Sceptre over these Lands (and long, long may it be) we have no Ground to fear any such *Act*, to the Grief of the Generality of his best Subjects in *Scotland*. And further, which would be in the plainest Contradiction to our *Ecclesiastical Rights*, secured to us by the *Acts* of both Kingdoms, as said our *Commission* 1711, in their Address to Queen *Anne*,

Some

Some have told us, \* They remember to have heard of a Passage quoted from the *Roman Law* to this Purpose, That when any Law, Decree or Grant should be obtained from the Sovereign by Subreption or fraudulent Information, it should not be binding upon the Judge who was to give Sentence according to such an Act. And one of the Reasons alledged for that Act is, That the Consciences of the Judges might not be violated, by being obliged to determine contrary to natural Equity, and the common Interest of the Lieges. Now, If for Judges to determine contrary to natural Equity and the common Interest of the Lieges, is to violate Conscience, as I doubt not it is; then I'm certain the Church of Scotland, as she would keep in with Conscience, ought carefully to guard against giving Countenance by her Sentences to any Settlement upon *Presentations*, without the Consent of the People of that Congregation over which the Person is to be placed; for so to do, is to act contrary to natural Equity, and the common Interest of the Lieges in that Congregation, and a doing to them what we would not they should do to us.

But then as to the Minister's Maintenance, if as some tell us, 'tis Law that *beneficium sequitur officium*, or that the Minister settled by the Presbytery hath a civil Right to the Stipend, then he cannot want a suitable Maintenance: But if this shall be refused, then, as by the divine Law, *the Labourer is worthy of his Reward*, 1 Tim. 5. 18. so the People of such or such Congregations should rather contribute of their carnal Things for a suitable Maintenance, than to have a Pastor thrust in upon them to the Hurt of their precious Souls.

In the subsequent Conferences, you'll find it proven, That to censure Ministers or others for Non-obedience to the Injunctions of superior or supreme Judicatures, when their Commands are unjust, is contrary to the Doctrine of our Confession of Faith, as well as to the Word of God. So the Author more readily complied with the Desire of Writing upon the Subject, that not

only

only at *licensing* to preach the Gospel, but also again at his *Ordination* he came under solemn Obligations to *assert*, and not only to assert, but also to *maintain and defend to the utmost of his Power* the *Doctrine* of that *Confession*; and having come under the same Obligations with Respect to our *Discipline*, he the more chearfully wrote the following Dialogues, being of Opinion, with a late Author, that “certainly a Piece of slavish  
“Impiety is as much committed by a Man’s suppressing  
“within his own Breast what in his Conscience he thinks  
“it is his Duty to profess, as by professing what he doth  
“not believe.”

As sometimes the Author hath Occasion to mention People’s Right to elect their own Pastors; so by the People having this Right, he means the Nobility, Barons, Gentry, Heretors, Magistrates, Town-Council, Ministers in Collegiate Charges, Feuers, Elders, Deacons, and People of inferior Rank, of our Communion, having their Residence in the vacant Congregation.

Tho’ in this Tractate the Author hath advanced nothing but what he takes to be Truth; yet as all Men are fallible and may err, so if any shall discover an Error in the Performance, upon Conviction from Scripture, or our Standards, he’ll say, *errare possum, hereticus esse nolo*, being ready in such a Case with Chearfulness to retract.

It is Pity the Subject hath not had an abler Pen to handle it; for many Times the Strength of unsound Principles lies in the Weakness of such as are Advocates for the Truth; every one hath not *satis humorum*, or Shoulders enough, for the Burden, as *Zuinglius* said of an honest Champion for the Truth in his Day. But though the Author of the ensuing *Dialogues*, without affected Humility, judges himself to be among the weakest that are for *private Judgment*, and against *blind Obedience* to the highest; yet, seeing he could hear of none engaging in this necessary Quarrel, though the most of those he had Occasion to converse with upon the Subject declared, they judged some Thing of this Nature was needful at the Time, he chused, rather than that Adversaries should triumph without the least

Answer,



Answer, to allow (at the Desire of some whom he esteems) the Publication of the following *Dialogues*, which, through the Divine Blessing, he hopes may be of some Use to stop the Mouths of Adversaries; for sometimes out of the Mouths of such as are but like *Babes and Sucklings* he hath ordained Strength, so as to still the Enemy and Avenger, *Psal. viii. 2.*

The Author of the ensuing *Dialogues*, if known, lays his Account with Frowns, if not Ill-will, from sundry, for what he hath written here; yet it is his Comfort, that as he had no Design against any in particular at writing, so he can appeal to the Omniscient, he hath no Prejudice at any of his Opposites, but wishes them all Prosperity; desiring they may believe he acted from Conviction of Duty in what he hath said upon the Subjects treated of or touched in this Performance; designing, as the Divine Glory, the Good of the Church of Christ in *Scotland*, and Benefit of human Society, being perswaded such are the best Friends to Church, to State, and all Societies, who are most concerned to observe the *Royal Law of Christ*, which binds every Society, whereas such, as are regardless thereof, are a Plague and Pest to all Societies.

Perhaps he may be charged by some as being of a divisive Spirit; yet all causeless Division is what his Soul abhors, wishing People may consider with serious Deliberation, weighing in the *Balance of the Sanctuary* what are the Grounds for which they do withdraw, or are tempted to withdraw, from any that bears the Character of a Minister of Christ; minding it is not every Thing amiss in a Minister's Conduct, whether in Church Judicatures or otherwise, that will be sufficient Ground of rejecting, or yet of dissenting from his Ministry. Ministers are Men of like Passions with others, having Infirmities with which they are to bear, as they would fulfil the *Law of Christ*; remembering the best of Christ's Servants may differ in their Sentiments about many Things, *Acts. xv. 39.*

Hoping the Reader will lay aside all Prejudice, and wishing him much Benefit by reading, I bid him heartily Adieu.

# [ ] A GENERAL INDEX.

**A** Arguments for *censuring* such Brethren in the Church of *Scotland* as did not obey the Commands of our General Assemblies, with Answers to them, p. 4—25.

Arguments against censuring those Brethren for their Non-Obedience, p. 26—52.

Arguments of a more general Nature, which concern all, in favours of *private Judgment*, and against *blind Obedience* to the highest, when their Commands are sinful or dubious, p. 52—103.

Of what Authority is the 2d Book of *Discipline* to us, being of such antient Date, p. 32, 33, 34.

A History of seven *Regulations* anent the calling of Gospel-Ministers made in this Church since the *Reformation*, p. 41—46.

Eminent Ministers in the Church of *Scotland* instance, as famous Mr. *Knox*, Masters *Henderson*, *Gillespie*, *Rutherford*, *Wood*, *Dickson*, *Fleeming*, *Publick Resolutions*, *Jamieson* and *Dunlop*, p. 78—83.

So also eminent Ministers among the *English Dissenters*, as *Hudson*, *Poole*, *Jenkyn*, *Alsop*, the Authors of the *Case of indifferent Things in the Worship of God*, also the *Provincial Assembly* which met in the Province of *London* 1649; so both *Independents* and *Presbyterians*, in their *Syncretism* drawn up and agreed to 1689, p. 83—87.

Again, eminent Persons in the established Church of *England*, as Bishop *Davenant*, *Hales*, *Chillingworth*, *Stillingfleet*, Dr. *Field*, Dr. *Barrow*, Bishop of *Hereford*, Bishops *Burnet*, *Croft*, *Bramhall* and *Reynolds*, Dr. *Sherlock*, and even Archbishop *Land*, Mr. *Charles Leslie*, Dr. *Whitaker*, Dr. *Hoadley* Bishop of *Bangor*; and of *Scots* Bishops, as Dr. *Forbes* Bishop of *Aberdeen*, and the Bishop of *Edinburgh* by his *Imprimatur* to some Sermons; which declared for the Doctrine of *private Judgment*, and against all *blind Obedience*; as also the Judgment of *James I.* of *England*, p. 88—92.

[ 1 ]  
That the Doctrine of *blind Obedience* is not tenable  
proven by sundry Instances of such as have argued for  
it, p. 95—99.

The Question answered, Who is to be Judge, when  
*Superiors* think one Thing, and *Inferiors* think an-  
other? p. 103, 104, 105.

Whether now is the Act of Parliament 1690 of any  
Force in this Church, in case there is not a *Presenta-  
tion*? answered, p. 106.

Whether was that Act 1690 made with the Consent  
and by the Advice of those old worthy *Presbyterian*  
Ministers, who had been suffering under *Prelacy* before  
the *Revolution*? answered, p. 107—112.

Whatever is the People's Right of Election, it is  
shown, in the Author's Esteem, that less than what is  
their Due would satisfy them in our present Situation,  
and what that less is, p. 113, 114.

That People have a Divine Right to elect their Pastors  
shown, with Answers to some Objections, p. 115—133.

Whether, because Heritors before the Revolution are  
said to have been all Elders, was that the Reason why  
they had no more Voice in the Election of Ministers than  
People of inferior Rank till the Revolution, p. 133, 134.

What may silence *Seceders*, and satisfy such as are  
ready to think the censuring Brethren is a sinful Term  
of Communion, and that therefore People ought to se-  
parate from the Church of *Scotland*, shown p. 135—138.

Eminent Divines in the Church of *England* instanced,  
who have declared for the People's Right to elect their  
Pastors, p. 139, 140, 141.

Though Ministers are not obliged to *blind Obedience*,  
whether are they obliged to *absolute Submission*, or Sub-  
mission in all Things? answered, p. 144, 145.

In the 7th Dialogue there are 12 or 13 *Corollaries*, in  
which, among other Particulars, the Sin of *Patrons* in  
presenting, and of *Presentees* in accepting, while the  
Congregation is averse and opposite, is manifested  
p. 147—163.

At the End of the Book there are nine *Addendums*.



PRIVATE JUDGMENT *defended, &c.*

DIALOGUE I.

TIMOTHEUS.

SIR, I am glad to see you, having longed for a Meeting, that we might confer about some Matters of Moment.

IRENEUS.

Pray, what are the Affairs anent which you longed for a Conference?

Tim. It is about the State of Affairs in the Church of *Scotland*, which look with a very black and melancholy Aspect to many of the most serious and religious; particularly with respect to the higher Judicatures of this Church their censuring such Ministers and Elders as have not Freedom to obey their Sentences, enjoining them to settle Ministers upon little more than *bare Presentations*; the Body of the Congregation being utterly and openly opposite to the Settlement.

Iren. There are sundry Things in the Conduct of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, which are as little satisfactory to me as to any else.

Tim. I do not question that; but, in regard you have had better Opportunity of knowing the Conduct of our higher Judicatures, *Commission* and *General Assembly*, I would fain have your Sentiments of their late Sentences and Censures.

Iren. Be pleased to let me know what are the particular Sentences you and others complain of,

Tim. It is complained, 1. That the Assembly 1750 did enjoin the Presbytery of *Perth* to settle the Parish of *Methven* with one that had little more than a *bare Presentation* for a Call to that Parish; appointing, in case of their Refusal to obey the Assembly's Sentence in that Affair, that they should be censured by their

*Commission*: And they not having Freedom in their Consciences to concur in that Settlement, were cited before their *Commission*, who did accordingly rebuke them. 2. It is complained, that the Assemblies 1749 and 1750 did enjoin the Presbytery of *Linlithgow* to settle the Parish of *Torphichen* with a Probationer, to whom the whole People residing in that Congregation (if it was not about two or three Persons) were very opposite: And that Presbytery, not having obeyed the Injunction of former *General Assemblies*, were cited to the Assembly 1751, where they were rebuked. 3. It is complained, that the Commission of the last General Assembly, viz. 1751, which met at *Edinburgh* November 13th that Year, did enjoin the Presbytery of *Dumfries* to settle the Parish of *Terreagles*, though the Congregation was utterly against the Candidate's being settled among them. 4. It is further complained of this last Commission, that they have enjoined the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under Pain of Censure by them in *March* next, to settle the Parish of *Inverkeithing* upon a Presentation, while the Congregation were and continue to be against the Settlement; and that Commission hath appointed the Reverend Mr. *John Spence* Minister of the Gospel at *Orwell* to preach and moderate at that Ordination, though the Commission was told, before they past this Sentence, That his Situation was such in that Congregation, that, should he obey their Sentence, he could not thereafter expect to have the Face of a Congregation to preach unto.

*Iren.* Seeing you ask my Sentiments as to these Sentences, I sincerely declare, I think they ought not to be obeyed; Settlements *invito grege*, or against the Congregations Consent, being directly contrary to repeated Acts of our General Assemblies; being also a manifest Hindrance to the Success of the Gospel in the Hand of the Candidate settled; and if, as I nothing doubt, *Scripture Consequences* be Scripture, as is asserted by orthodox Divines against *Arians*, *Socinians*, and others, then that Practice is also opposite to the Sacred Oracles, the Scriptures of Infallible Truth. And as for the Assembly's

sembly's Conduct in censuring such as have not Freedom in their Consciences to obey such Sentences; after hearing Arguments *pro* and *con* at the last Assembly, I was more and more confirmed that such Censures are what can never be justified, overthrowing the *Doctrine of private Judgment*, for which we are to contend as *pro aris & focis*, this being one of the Truths *delivered to the Saints*.

*Tim.* As before meeting I long'd to see you, so then I had a threefold Request to make unto you, the granting of which will oblige me much.

*Iren.* If in my Power, you need not doubt of my Willingness to grant all your reasonable Desires; and therefore let me hear them.

*Tim.* The *First* of them is, That you give me your Judgment of that important Question, much agitated in the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, Whether are People, Ministers and Elders in particular, obliged in Conscience to obey the Commands of the superior Judicatures, especially of our supreme Judicature the General Assembly, whether they can see them to be agreeable to the Divine Law, or not?

*Iren.* To that I answer very briefly, That albeit we are to yield ready and cheerful Obedience to all their Injunctions, to all their lawful and reasonable Commands, and that *not only for Wrath*, or Fear of Censure, *but for Conscience sake*; and albeit it should, in some Respect, be afflicting to us, when their Commands are such that we cannot obey them; yet if, upon Trial and Examination, they be such that we cannot see they are agreeable to the Divine Will, we are not to obey in the least: Or, if we but entertain a Doubt of their Lawfulness, we are not, we ought not, to obey; for as in all Cases we are to obey God rather than Man, so, by the Royal Law of the Supreme Lawgiver, every Man is to be *fully persuaded in his own Mind* of the Lawfulness of what he doth; \* *for whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*. Let me hear your next Request.

A 2

*Tim.*

\* Rom. 14. 4, 23.



*Tim.* My *Second* Request is, That you may be pleased to give me an Account of the Arguments adduced at the last Assembly, for censuring those Brethren who had refused Obedience to the General Assembly 1750; desiring also to know what was said, or what you think may be answered to such Arguments.

*Iren.* I cannot pretend to one of the best of Memories; Yet, to the best of my Remembrance, I'll tell you what was argued for inflicting Censures upon such Ministers; and then show what was, or might in my Opinion been, answered to those Arguments.

*Tim.* Proceed then.

*Iren.* First, It was argued at the last Assembly, That such Brethren as had not obeyed the Command of the former Assemblies, were guilty of contemning the Authority of this Church, and therefore deserved high Censure, the General Assembly being our highest Judicature.

*Tim.* What was answered to that?

*Iren.* To this it was or might been answered, Tho' we are much to regard Authority, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, commanding what is right and agreeable to the Divine Will; yet, if the Command of the highest upon Earth be contrary to the Authority of the King of Kings, we are to condemn it, so far as not to yield Obedience thereto. Hence judicious *Calvin* says, *Si acquiescistis imperio, &c.* "If you have acquiesced in Authority, you have wrapt yourselves in a very evil Snare." \* Indeed Archbishop *Spotiswood*, in his Sermon before that *Perth Assembly*, at which the known *five Articles of Perth* were approved, said, "Put Case, Authority should appoint Orders in the Church, which tend not to set forward Godliness and Piety; yet they must be obeyed by the Members of that Church, as long as they have the Force of an Institution. And if any say, My Conscience suffers me not to obey, for I am persuaded that such things are not right nor appointed; I answer (*says he*) In Matters of this Nature and Quality, the Sentence of thy Superiors ought

"ought to direct thee, and this is a sufficient Ground  
 "for thy Conscience for obeying." Bishop *Parker*  
 spake in the same Dialect, and so have sundry others of  
 the Church of *England* Divines. This is monstrous  
 Doctrine; and yet it looks too like this, to oblige Mem-  
 bers of inferior Church Judicatures to obey the Com-  
 mands of superior Judicatures, whether they can judge  
 them right or not. But as all *Presbyterians* have  
 opposed this strange Doctrine of blind Obedience, so  
 also have many of *Episcopal* Principles: As, to name  
 but one of them at this Time, viz. the learned *Hales*,  
 who affirms, "That when either false or uncertain  
 "Conclusions are obtruded for Truth; or Acts, either  
 "unlawful, or ministring just Scruple, are required of  
 "us to be performed; in those Cases Consent were  
 "Conspiracy, and open Contestation is not Faction or  
 "Schism, but due Christian Animosity." No rational  
 Soul can doubt but God is to be obeyed rather than  
 Man or Men, be they never so far superior to us: His  
 Laws and Authority are to be regarded, come of the  
 Laws and Authority of fallible Mortals what will; and  
 when they, by their Authority, enjoin any Thing that  
 is unjust, *we are not to be careful to answer them in*  
*this Matter*; and to do otherwise, would be with the  
*wicked to contemn God*, and trample upon his Authority.

*Tim.* Just now you cited one *Hales*: Pray who was  
 he? was this Judge *Hales*, who was an Ornament to  
 that Reign in which he lived?

*Iren.* No: This was *Hales* of *Eaton College* in *Cam-*  
*bridge*, a very eminent rare Person also. The Publi-  
 sher of his *Tracts* gives him the Epithet of *Incompa-*  
*rable*: That acute Author of *Melius Inquirendum*, viz.  
 the Reverend Mr. *Alsop*, says, he was one of whom the  
 Church of *England* had Ground to boast: *Stillingfleet*  
 gives him the Character of being as learned and judi-  
 cious a Divine as most the *English* Nation hath bred:  
 And Dr. *Pierson* says much the same of him; af-  
 firming he was a Man of as great Sharpness, Quick-  
 ness and Stability of Wit, as *England*, or perhaps any  
 Nation, ever bred. But, to conclude this Argument  
 with

with the learned and judicious Mr. Gillespie \*, I say, "Even when our Consciences suffer us not to obey, yet still we submit, and subject ourselves; and neither do, nor shall (I trust) shew any the least Contempt of Authority." So, according to him, it is not a Contempt of Authority, to refuse blind Obedience to Men's Commands; but only a shewing greater Regard to the Authority of *the Governor among the Nations*, than to any human Authority whatsoever.

*Tim.* I am fully of your Mind, namely, that if *human* Authority compete with *divine*, it is to be condemned. But go on to a *second* Argument.

*Iren.* The *second* Argument adduced for censuring those Brethren who had not Freedom to obey the Sentence of the General Assembly, was, That they justly deserved Censure, because they had renounced the *Presbyterian* Principle of Subjection and Obedience to the Sentences of superior Judicatures, much of the Beauty of *Presbytery* being to be seen in the Subordination of the inferior to the superior Judicatures of the Church.

*Tim.* Well, what was answered, or what think you can be answered to that?

*Iren.* I think it may be answered, That albeit it is alledged by some, 'tis a *Presbyterian* Principle, that all are to be subject and obedient to the Sentences of superior Church Judicatures, yet this is what can never be yielded. It was never a *Presbyterian* Principle, that the Sentences of the highest Church Judicatures, was it an *Oecumenical* Council, are to be obeyed with positive Obedience, when they enjoin any Thing we judge to be unlawful, or against the Word of God; for Subjection to a Sentence, tho' unjust, is one Thing, and to yield positive Obedience to it is quite another Thing. Was positive Obedience to all their Sentences or Commands a *Presbyterian* Principle, I should reckon it Duty, without a Moment's Delay, to renounce *Presbytery*. The Doctrine of the *publick* Conscience was never espoused by *Presbyterians*. Dr. Rule, who read much



much about, wrote much and suffered much for, *Presbyterian Principles*, says \* of the Doctrine of *publick Conscience*, "It is a Solecism in Divinity: The Will of Superiors, blind Obedience, is an old *Popish* Tool, to enslave Consciences; but such an express affronting of Conscience is a new Invention, that this Age is honoured with." Was that Doctrine true, *Presbyterians* would have little to do with Conscience in such Things, but to know what is the Assembly's Will; and then they might rest secure in obeying, enjoin what they will.

Bishop Burnet, in the Preface to his *Vindication of the Ordinations of the Church of England*, affirms, "That the Words, in all Things lawful and honest, are necessary and just Reserves of the Obedience promised to Ecclesiastical Superiors;" and no doubt they are.

Professor Rutherford was an eminent *Presbyterian*, writing much for *Presbytery*; yet he, in his *Due Right of Presbytery* P. 42, 43, says, "When the Sentence of the Judge is manifestly unjust, the Executioners and Lictors are not to execute it: For *Doeg the Edomite* sinned in killing the Lord's Priests at the Command of Saul, and the Footmen of Saul did religiously refuse that Service; the Soldiers, who crucified *Christ*, not only as Men but as Lictors, sinned against a Principle of the Gospel, which they were obliged to believe (*Mary's Son is the true Messiah*) the Executioner, who beheaded *John Baptist*, sinned, because he was obliged to know this (*That a Prophet, who rebuketh Incest in a King, ought not to be put to Death therefore*)—The Command of the Prince can remove no Doubt of Conscience," and as little will the Command of any other Superior; and there he hath much more to this Purpose. So Mr. George Gillespie, another eminent *Presbyterian*, affirms, † *That the Decrees of any Council whatsoever ought carefully to be tried, whether they agree with the Scriptures, or not*; and so he judged they are to be regarded by us, or not:

Tis

\* Rat. Def. of Nonconformity, p. 25.

† Treatise against Cer. p. 296.

'Tis to the *Divine Law and Testimony* we are to go for Direction.

But how contrary this Doctrine is to *Presbyterian* Principles, may be or is further evident from what those eminent *Presbyterian London Ministers* assert in their *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, p. 230, where they say "It is granted, that the highest Ecclesiastical Assembly in the World cannot require from the lowest a *Subordination absolute*, and *pro arbitrio*, i. e. at their own Will and Pleasure, but only in some Respect, *Subordination absolute* being only to the Law of God laid down in Scripture: We detest *Papish Tyranny*, which claims a Power of giving their Will for a Law; 'tis *Subjection in the Lord* that is pleaded for: The straightest Rule in the World, unless the Holy Scripture, we affirm to be *regulam regularam*, i. e. a Rule to be regulated, Peace being only in walking according to Scripture Canon, *Gal. vi. 16.*"

It is further noticeable, That though sundry assert this of obeying our Superiors in the Church is a *Presbyterian* Principle, yet I have never heard of their instancing any *Presbyterian* that asserted so much, nor giving the least Authority for their Affirmation, when their Commands are judged to be unlawful.

*Tim.* I wonder any should affirm the Doctrine of blind Obedience to Men in any Case is due or required by *Presbyterians* to superior Judicatures. But let me hear another of their Arguments.

*Iren.* A third Argument for censuring those Brethren who had not obeyed the Assembly's Orders, was to this Purpose, That they deserved Censure; because it was not from any Thing like a Principle of Conscience, or because they feared it would be Sin in them to concur with such Settlements as the Assembly enjoined; but from an Affectation of *Popularity*, to please the People, and commend themselves to them, as being Men of more tender Consciences.

*Tim.* What was, or what think you might been, replied to that Argument?

*Iren.* It might been replied, Who told them so much?

As all Men, so especially such as set up for singular Charity, ought to put the best Construction upon their Neighbours Actions or Words they can bear; *for Charity thinketh no Evil: Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth* \*. As we are not to do *quod libet*, or what liketh us; so many times we are not to do *quod licet*, or that which is lawful for us; but *quod expedit*, or that which is expedient: *All Things are lawful for me* (saith the Apostle) *but all Things are not expedient; all Things are lawful for me, but all Things edify not* †. Calvin and Viret, in writing to Farel, express themselves thus; "We only desire, that you humour the People as far as your Duty will allow: There are, as you know, two Sorts of Popularity.—I hope you will pardon, if we treat somewhat freely with you: In this Degree we see you do not satisfy the Good themselves; were there even no other Fault, yet in this you sin, because you do not content the Godly, to whom the Lord has appointed you a Debtor:" *Better a Milstone was hanged about our Neck, and that we were drowned in the Depths of the Sea, than that we justly offend one of Christ's little ones.* The great and good Mr. Corbet, as Mr. Daniel Burges calls him, and of whom Mr. Calamy says he was every Way a great Man, in his *Kingdom of God among Men*, Page 175, says, "The Truth is, a Minister's Reputation is of great Moment to the Ends of his Ministry: and he is not to be blamed, that is loth it should suffer Shipwreck; and an Appearance or Suspicion of Time-serving doth greatly endanger it. If a Man should forbear some Compliances, which he charitably foresees will bring him into a vehement Suspicion thereof, in Charity it should be taken not for an undue Valuation of his own Credit, but for a tender Regard to the Honour of the Gospel."

Some are apt to say, The Command of Authority, or the Injunction of the General Assembly, is enough

B

\* Rom. 14. 4.

† 1 Cor. 10. 23, 32, 33.



to take away all the Scruple that can be supposed to arise from the People's taking Offence. But I must beg leave to differ from them, having some of the most tender judicious *Casuits* to support me here, as the great Mr. *Durham Professor of Divinity* in the College of *Glasgow*, who, in his elaborate Treatise on *Scandal* \*, having put the Question, "What is to be done, when there seems to be an Opposition between the Command of a Superior and the eschewing of Offence, &c." he in Answer says, "In that Case the Scandal is still active and given, and therefore no Command of Authority can warrant one in such a Deed:" And there he cites *Ames* in his *Cases of Conscience*, and *Gillespie* in his *Dispute of Ceremonies*, asserting *No Man can command either our Charity or our Consciences, or make up the Hazard of a given Offence, &c.* Tho' all the World should take Offence for doing what is commanded Duty, we are to do it notwithstanding: But in Actions of an *indifferent Nature* we ought to abstain from them, when we know they give, or are ready to give, Offence to them that are weaker: writing after the Apostle's Example, *1 Cor. 8.* who, after he had said in the 12th ver. *But when ye so sin against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ:* in the 13th ver. he says, *Wherefore, if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh while the World standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend.* A conforming Clergyman in the Church of *England*, speaking of that Church, says, "The Church, I am of Opinion, may thank her Preferments for the extreme Zeal of many of her Votaries in the Case of Conformity: The *Roman* Clergy had never stickled so earnestly to have advanced their Bishop above the *Council*, if the latter could have given Dignities as well as the former: The Whore of *Babylon* never wanted Pledgers, whenever she drank to them out of her golden Cup, whatever Abominations it was filled with." Were we to say any Thing to that Purpose, concerning those that still appear with Warmth

ON

on the Side of *Patronages* or *Presentations*, and against the antient Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland* anent the People's Right to chuse their Pastors, we would be reckoned very uncharitable; and yet perhaps such secular selfish Considerations sway them not a little many Times, that being the Way to Preferment and Favours from or by greater ones.

*Tim.* I own the Doctrine of Offence is no such light Matter as many take it to be. But go forward.

*Iren.* A *fourth* Argument for censuring the disobedient Brethren was, That unless they were censured for their Disobedience to the Commands of the General Assembly, the *Constitution* of this Church was ruined, and her Foundation sapt; because after this her Authority would be contemned, and her Commands trampled upon.

*Tim.* Let me hear what could be said in Answer to that Argument.

*Iren.* It might be answered, 1<sup>st</sup>, All the true Sons of the Church of *Scotland* will be sorry for every thing that can occasion the least Hurt to the *Constitution* of their *Mother Church*; yet when it may come to this, that they must either offend their heavenly Father, or do what may displease their Mother, they can never be in a Strait what to choose.

2<sup>dly</sup>, It might been answered, They might think it would be a Stroke at our Church Constitution for them to have a Hand in settling any Minister in their Bounds, with little more than a bare *Presentation* for a Call, command it who will. The Commission of the General Assembly 1711, in their *Address* to Queen *Anne*, said; "We conceive the restoring Patronages is contrary to our Church Constitution, and therefore it will inevitably obstruct the Work of the Gospel, and create great Disorders and Disquiet in this Church and Nation." And there they tell the Queen how, by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Books of *Discipline*, published soon after the *Reformation*, "Patronages had been declared a Yoke and Burden upon the Church of *Scotland*, being still judged a Grievance till they came to be by Law abolished." If contrary to our Church Constitution, and

*an inevitable Obstruction to the Work of the Gospel*, they have a Tendency to ruin our Constitution.

But, 3<sup>dly</sup>, I cannot see how the omitting Censure in such a Case was a striking at our Constitution, none being to prosecute for this Omission; and the Church of *Scotland* hath owned, in her Confession of Faith \*, that "All Synods and Councils since the Apostles Times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the Rule of Faith or Practice." What if the Church of *Scotland*, by forbearing to censure, should have owned, that in this Injunction she had erred, which would have put an End to the Affair; Shall this Church think shame thus to own so much, after what she hath declared in her Confession of Faith just now cited? It was a scandalous Letter written by Archbishop *Whitgift*, and sent to Queen *Elizabeth* in 1584, in which, complaining of the *English Parliament*, he says, "They have also passed a Bill giving Liberty to marry at all Times of the Year without Restraint, contrary to the Old Canons continually observed amongst us, and containing Matter which tendeth to the Slander of this Church, as having hitherto maintained an Error." Some have said, and justly, "It may be as high a Point in Religion for People to own a Mistake when convinced of it, as to hold fast the Truth."

But, 4<sup>thly</sup>, It cannot be thought our Church Constitution is in the least Danger of being ruined by the Brethren's Conduct, till they shall show some Scripture Canon, or some fundamental Constitution, Canon, Decree, Act or Rule of our General Assemblies, in former Times, those Brethren have transgressed in not obeying the Assembly in the present Case.

But though we should grant, which yet we cannot, That their former Sentences censuring, and that the Sentence of the last Commission threatening to censure, the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, were just Sentences; yet for them to have delayed, or for them to delay, the Execution of such Sentences, could never have over-



overturned our Constitution, more than it was an overturning of the Constitution of *Oecumenick Councils*, when sometimes they saw meet to delay the Execution of their Sentences, yea and alter them, to prevent Schism in the Church. *Augustine*, in his Account of the *Donatists*, tells, that sometimes *Councils*, who have condemned Men, have yet for Peace, without any Satisfaction, again restored them, upon after Thoughts: And he observed it as a great Condescension in the Bishops of *Spain*, that they did so in the Case of *Osius*, when he was found innocent by the *French*; "They did not (says *Augustine*) pertinaciously, with Animosity, defend their former Sentences, lest they should fall into the Sacrilege of Schism, which (says he) doth exceed all Wickedness;" and with that Humility Peace was preserved, because they chused rather to be against their own Sentences, than that the Unity of the Church should be injured. *Durham* \* says, It was one of the Ways of composing Differences in antient Times, that when Men were orthodox and profitable, though failing in some gross Particular, yet, when they were owned by others in the Church, Synods did not stand for Concord to remove such Sentences. There also he cites *Augustine* approving of the not censuring of *Optatus*, lest thereby a Schism should be occasioned, because of many their adhering to him.

*Tim.* It seems they have been more afraid of Schism in the Church at that Time, than in our Days, in which not a few, who are Members in our Judicatures, speak as if they would think it no great Evil, though the largest Part of the Church of *Scotland* should turn Dissenters, turning their Backs upon their Ministry. But proceed.

*Iren.* Further, 5thly, In Cases of this Nature, if the supreme Judicature think it absolutely necessary that such or such a Sentence shall be execute, then what shall hinder them to appoint some of their own Number, who have voted for that Sentence, to execute it? Or they may appoint some in that Presbytery or Synod,

ap-

\* On Scandal, Part 4, Chap. 12,

approving thereof, to put it in Execution: But to enjoin such as declare, without violating their Light, and going over the Belly of Conscience, they cannot have the least Hand in executing such a Sentence, is what in my Opinion can never be justified. Such as stand up for the People's Right in Election, or for a free Consent, they are the truest Friends to our Constitution and Reformation Principles: Others of opposite Conduct, who are Friends to *Presentations*, and to *accepting Presentees*, they patronize a corrupt Innovation, which both in its Tendency, and as a dangerous Precedent, threatens the utter Overthrow of our Presbyterian Constitution; and, as in 1711, the Church of Scotland told Queen Ann in their *Address* to her against Patronages, *At the Revolution the Abolition of Patronages was made a Part of our Constitution.*

6thly, The Assembly's delaying to determine in such an *Affair*, might have been a necessary Caution to our General Assemblies, in Time coming, to take better heed to their Appointments, which would secure them against having their Sentences disregarded; whereas that of a Rebuke, or severer Sentences, will not effect this, if their Sentences be unjust, as long as there are Men of Principle and Conscience in this Church, resolved in the Strength of supernatural Grace to choose the greatest of Sufferings, rather than the least of Sins. Sin provokes the Holy One of *Israel* to ruin the best of Constitutions, and also it ruins precious Souls. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

*Tim.* I am perswaded, if Men adhere honestly to the Constitutions and Ordinances of *Zion's King*, he will not fail to preserve their Church Constitution. But go on to another Argument.

*Iren.* The *fifth* Argument for censuring those Brethren was this, That by their Disobedience they had broken their Ordination Engagements; by which they became bound to subject themselves to all Presbyteries and superior Judicatures of this Church: And now having refused to obey the Assembly's Sentence enjoining

joining them to concur in settling such Parishes, surely they justly deserve high Censure.

*Tim.* If guilty of breaking their Ordination Engagements, no doubt they deserved Censure; for an honest Man, tho' he should *swear to his own Hurt, yet he changeth not.* Pray let me hear what you can say in Answer to that Charge.

*Iren.* I think that Accusation was unjust; for to engage to Submission is one Thing, and to engage to yield positive Obedience is quite another Thing, as I hinted to you formerly: These are *toto cælo* different. There is not a Syllable in any of our Ordination Engagements requiring Obedience to all the Commands of superior Judicatures, such Obligations would be *vincula iniquitatis* with a Witness; an Obligation to yield *blind Obedience*, and act by the *implicit Faith* of Romanists.

It would be considered, that all the Subjection or Obedience we can come under to Superiors, 'tis only to be *in the Lord*: So Children are commanded to obey their Parents, and Wives are commanded to be obedient to their own Husbands, but it is only in the Lord, as *Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 18.* *In the Lord*, that is, in things that are agreeable to the Will of the Lord: But, as says our old Confession of Faith, Chap. or Article 20, which treats of General Councils their Power and Authority; "If Men, under the Name of a Council, pretend to forge unto us new Articles of our Faith, or to make Constitutions repugning to the Word of God, then utterly we must refuse the same as the Doctrine of Devils, which draweth our Souls from the Voice of our only God to follow the Doctrines and Constitutions of Men."

I have read that, at the Council of *Trent*, when the Ambassador of the Duke of *Brandenburgh* presented his *Mandate* to the Council, he shewed his Master's good Affection to, and Reverence of the Fathers of that Synod; they answered very discreetly, telling him, "That the Council had heard his Discourse with real Content, especially that Part of it, wherein the Elector doth submit himself to the Council, and promiseth,

" to



“ to observe the Decrees of it, hoping that his Deeds  
 “ will be answerable to his Word.” But, as the Historian observed, here the Council pretended a Promise of no less than Ten thousand, when the Bargain was only Ten; the Ambassador profered only *Reverence*, and they accept of *Obedience*; so Ministers at their Ordination promise only Subjection, and here they require Obedience: And the Presbyterian Church of *Scotland* hath always been so tender upon this Point, that no Instance can be given of her requiring any such Obedience at Licensing, Ordination or Admission of Ministers.

I remember that under Prelacy, there were two Oaths to which Ministers were engaged; the one was called the *greater*, and the other the *lesser Oath*: In the greater Oath they swear, “ to be leal and true to the  
 “ King’s Majesty, and his Highness’s Successors; and  
 “ to the utmost of their Power to maintain his Highness’s Right and Prerogative in Causes ecclesiastical;  
 “ and that they should be obedient to their Ordinary  
 “ the Archbishop, and to all others their Superiors in  
 “ the Church; and that they maintain the present  
 “ Government of the Church, and Jurisdiction Episcopal: And that they should live peaceable Ministers  
 “ in the Church, subjecting themselves to the Orders  
 “ that therein were, or should be established.” Which was a swearing to blind Obedience with a Witness; as was also the Oath called the *et cætera* Oath, which Bishop *Hall* tells he never had Freedom to administer to any. But the Church of *Scotland* never required any such Obligation of any of her Ministers.

*Tim.* Your Answers are satisfactory to me.

*Iren.* In the *sixth* Place it was argued, “ That such  
 “ Brethren are culpable, and therefore censurable, because  
 “ they still continue in Communion or Society with  
 “ this Church, seeking to share of her Privileges while  
 “ yet they will not obey her Commands, affirming,  
 “ ’Tis a Rule in all well regulated Societies, that when  
 “ People cannot comply with the Rules of the Society,  
 “ nor obey the Society’s Commands, they are to go  
 “ out from such Societies.”

*Tim.*

*Tim.* Let me hear your Answer to that, which I take to be their *Achilleun* Argument.

*Iren.* For Answer I say, Suppose the Rules of a Society to be good and just at Entry into it, if afterwards People will not live up to them, or refuse to obey them, they ought to go out from that Society, or that Society may cast them out for refusing to fulfil their former just Engagements: But if such a Society shall make new Regulations contrary to the former, or shall lay Injunctions on them which they cannot obey or comply with, judging them to be sinful; in such a Case they are not obliged to leave that Society, forgoing her Privileges, as long as they can stay therein without Sin, or being obliged to approve of any Thing which is unjust or sinful in that Society's Conduct. *2dly*, Our worthy Ancestors condemned themselves as being culpable, in that at the *Restoration* they forsook their ministerial Charges, or went out so easily from their Kirks and Benefices, judging they were obliged to have staid and contended for the Truth, till at least they were cast out and ejected by Violence. *3dly*, I find our most judicious Divines declaring, That in Case a Church or Society enjoin their Members to do what they judge to be contrary to the Divine Law, in such a Case the Imposers are the faulty Party, and not such as refuse to obey: And if so, then I humbly think, if a Church or Society have Privileges belonging to her, then those that refuse Obedience cannot be called to forego these Privileges, while they have done nothing amiss to forfeit their Right unto them. Dr. *Stillfleet* in his *Irenicum* says, \* "If it be said, that Men are bound to be ruled  
" by their Governors in determining what Things are  
" lawful, and what not; To this it is answered, first,  
" No Protestant can swear blind Obedience to Church  
" Governors in all Things; it is the highest Usurpation  
" to rob Men of the Liberty of their Judgments: That  
" which we plead for against the Papists, is, That all  
" Men have Eyes in their Heads as well as the Pope;  
" that every one hath a *judicium private discretionis*,  
" which

G

"which is the Rule of Practice to himself." And there he asserts, *The Power of Church Governors, in Matters of Duty, can bind no more than Reason and Evidence, brought from Scripture by them, doth.* The learned and ever memorable *Hales*, in his foresaid Tract of *Schism*, says, p. 8. "Where the Cause of Schism is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that is the Cause of the Separation, is the Schismatick." And there, p. 16. he adds, "To require the Execution of some unlawful or suspected Act, is a just Cause of refusing Communion; for not only in Reason, but in Religion too, that Maxim admits of no Release, *Cautissimi cujusque præceptum, quod dubitas ne feceris.*" So according to *Hales*, such as enjoin what is evil, they are the culpable and censurable Party, and not such as refuse to obey. And according to him, our being required to do a Thing which is unlawful, or but suspected to be such, is Ground of Separation, and consequently Ground for our refusing Obedience to the highest Judicature upon Earth; if we but doubt of the Lawfulness of the Thing, we are not to do it; for *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, as says the Spirit of God, speaking by the Apostle, *Rom. 14. 23.* Yea, even Archbishop *Laud* \*, in Conference with the Jesuit, says, "The Cause of the Separation is yours, for you thrust us out from you, because we called for Truth, and Redress of Abuses; for a Schism must needs be theirs whose the Cause of it is. The Woe runs full out of Christ's Mouth, even against him that *giveth* the Offence, not against him that *taketh* it." The Church of *England* Divines many Times, in arguing against *Romanists*, are forced to make use of those very Arguments which the Dissenters advance against them.

4thly, This Argument puts me in Mind of a Law amongst the Papists, of which we are told by the Author of *The Case of Protestants in England under a Popish Prince, if any shall happen to wear the imperial Crown*, printed 1681, p. 7. where he says, "But tho' Popish Writers generally agree, that Protestants by

" Law

\* *Laud's Sentiments of Sep. p. 128, 140, &c.*



“ Law have lost all Property, and have no Title at all  
 “ to any Estate; yet there is some Difference among  
 “ them, about the Possession of what is thus confiscated:  
 “ For many of them hold, that Hereticks, before any  
 “ Sentence, are bound in Conscience to quit the Posses-  
 “ sion of all they have, and sin damnably if they do  
 “ not; especially if their Heresy be publick and noto-  
 “ rious, as it is in all professed Protestants.” I leave the  
 Application to you.

5thly, It would be seriously considered here, that they labour under a great Mistake, who will have the Case to be the same in *Religious Societies* with what is in *Civil Societies*: For in Civil Societies, and secular Affairs, those may be submitted to a Vote, and the Judgment of the Majority may and ought to determine the Minority; but in Religious Societies, wherein every Man's Conscience is nearly concerned, it is quite otherwise, and private Judgment is not to be determined by the Declarations of Men nor Angels. If any Members of Religious Societies break or transgress the Rules which Christ the adorable Lawgiver hath given to his Church, then she may censure and cast them out from their Society, but not otherwise. The Church of Christ is a *Religious Society*, which is not properly *sui juris*, having a Power to make Regulations and Laws for themselves, but is obliged in Conscience to live up to the Laws her sovereign Lord and Lawgiver hath given her, contain'd in his written Word; and, while we can keep our Garments clean, we are not to go out from her.

The Churches of Christ are not such *voluntary Societies* as have Liberty to make what Regulations or Rules they please to themselves, for governing the Members of their Society: No, they are confined by the Will of *Zion's* only King and Lawgiver; so that none of her Judicatures can require more of any particular Member or Members, than he hath authoris'd them to require; they are tied down to the *Law and Testimony*, which is the unerring Rule ruling, by which all other Rules are to be ruled. So no Society nor Church under Heaven has any Authority to censure or cast out from

their Society any of their Members, unless they can show such Members have transgressed the Royal Law of Christ; 'Tis to the Words of our sovereign Lord *Jesus Christ*; to his *wholesom Words*, that we are to be obedient; and whoever do not consent to them, *they are proud; knowing nothing*, however highly conceited of their Knowledge they may be \*.

Further, 6thly, For Answer I say, our Lord never designed his Church should be modelled by any State or Civil Society, whether in Burgh or Kingdom. Christ's *Kingdom is not of this World; nor like unto worldly Politicks*, as says the learned *Hudson*: *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Dominion, but it shall not be so among you*, said our Lord to his Disciples.

Moreover, 7thly, Whereas they speak of being obliged to go out from the Society, when we have not Freedom to obey their Commands; surely Conscience, if it be not misled or misinformed, will never dictate this to be Duty. Suppose a Father and Mother, with the elder Brethren and Sisters of the Family, should enjoin a younger Brother or Sister to do what he or she judges to be sinful, and therefore cannot in this Case obey; Are they upon that obliged to leave the Family, forsaking that Domestick Society? I think, few or none, who are unprejudiced, would think so: And so of the Relation between a Sovereign and the Subjects, or her that stands in a conjugal Relation, neither Scripture nor sound Reason will ever dictate this to be Duty. If this Doctrine were reduced to Practice, it would make uncouth or odd Work in all Societies, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical.

Can Obedience to the Commands of a superior Society never be refused, without making a total Separation from that Society? Our worthy Ancestors, honest faithful Ministers in the Church of *Scotland*, did not think it Duty to separate and go out from the Society of this Church, when they refused to obey the Assembly that met at *Linlithgow* 1606, which enjoined all Presbyteries and Synods to receive *constant Male-*

rators.

*pators*; nor did the *Protesters* think themselves obliged to leave the Society of this Church, when the *publick Resolutioners* enjoined them to do what they judged to be unlawful,

And 8thly, To me it is strange, any who pretend so highly to understand *human Society*, professing such a tender Regard for its Good and Welfare, should entertain and defend such a pernicious Principle; a Principle which, in my Opinion, tends to the utter Ruin and Destruction of human Society: For, according to it, if the General Assembly should have appointed a Synod, as suppose the Synod of *Lothian and Tweeddale* to have settled a Parish, as the Parish of *Torphichen*, with one whom the Congregation could not have Freedom to join with; and the Synod should have refused to concur in that Settlement, judging it to be violent, and an Intrusion which they could not approve of in the least; Would that Synod, which may be consists of upwards of 100 or 200 Members, if every Minister, except in collegiate Charges, have an Elder at the Synod; must all these go out from the Society of this Church, when they cannot be convinced they have done any Thing amiss, nor omitted any Duty required in the Word of God, or by any Canon or Constitution of this Church? You know it is a received Maxim, That *majus & minus non variant speciem*; and we may argue from a Presbytery, as the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, to a Synod, and from a Synod to near the Half of an Assembly, they being inferior to the *major Part*.

But, to conclude this Answer to their main Argument, I say again, None can justly be censured for Disobedience to Superiors, if they have Scruples anent the Lawfulness of their Commands, till once such Superiors shall have convinced them, by fair and solid Reasoning, that they have transgressed the written Law of Christ, shewing them their Fears of Sin, had they obeyed, were altogether groundless; for to argue from mere Authority can never satisfy Conscience, nor solve Doubts. But no Attempt of this Nature has been made by our Superiors.



*Seventhly*, Some have told us in Print, That “no Man, who understands the fundamental Principles of Government, can hesitate a Moment, whether the Decrees of the supreme Authority should be put in Execution, or not.” And I acknowledge it is so, if we can judge them to be agreeable to the Laws of the Most High, *the Governor among the Nations*: But if the Decrees of the highest Authority upon Earth be contrary to his sovereign Will, we are to follow the noble Example of *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*, and of the greatly beloved *Daniel*; chusing rather to be cast into a fiery Furnace, or a Lion’s Den, than to yield the least Obedience to the highest breathing, or neglect a present Duty to please them.

*Eighthly*, They have also told us, That “the Honour of the Church was too deeply interested, to stand in Need of any Arguments for inforcing the intended Settlement,” viz. at *Torphichen*, which Settlement was under Consideration at the last Assembly. But surely the Honour of the glorious Head of the Church, the *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, is ten thousand times more to be consulted than the Honour of any Church on Earth.

*Ninthly*, They have also told us in Print, That every “Friend to our happy Constitution must feel in his own Bosom more powerful Perswasives than can well be expressed, to engage him warmly in the Support of good Order, to take such salutary Measures as may be necessary to prevent inferior Judicatures from neglecting, in Time coming, to comply with express and repeated Orders of the supreme Authority of this Church.”

*Answer*, It is good where the Zeal of God’s House eats up \*: And where People are cordial Friends to the Interest of Christ, and the happy Constitution of his Church, they will feel in their own Bosoms a Fire of Zeal burning against every Thing contrary the Order which the Law of Christ requires in the Settlement of Pastors in his Church; and that Order, in the Judgment of the Church of *Scotland*, is expressly against the

\* Psal. 69. 9.

the countenancing of *Patronages* and *Presentations*, where the People are openly opposite to the Settlement.

This Argument about good Order puts me in Mind of what that faithful zealous Servant of Christ, Mr. *Knox*, says in his 4th *Addition* to the *Letter* he sent to the Queen Regent of *Scotland* 1558; where, speaking of the Accusations of the Lord's People by Adversaries, he says, "They are accused to be Authors of Sedition, " Raisers of Tumults, Violaters of common Orders, " &c. I answer (*adds he*) —All is not reputed before God Sedition and Conjuraton which the foolish " Multitude so esteemeth: Neither yet is every Tumult, " and Breach of publick Order, contrary to God's " Commandment; for Christ Jesus himself, coming to " take the Spoil from the strong armed, who before " did keep his House in Quietness, is not come to send " Peace, but a Sword, and to make a Man disassent " from his Father, &c. His Prophets before him, and " his Apostles after him, fear'd not to break publick " Orders established against God, &c."

What such as used the above Argument mean by *salutary Means* or *Measures* I know not: I hope they do not mean Imprisonment, Banishment, Heading, Hanging, Drowning at Stake within the Sea Mark, which were the *salutary Measures*, or *wholesom Severities*, used to bring such to Order as did not obey the *Church* and *State* in the late Times. It is a Mercy some have no such Power; and a great Mercy we have a Sovereign to rule over us, who would abhor all such Measures; Long may he, and his Posterity, live to sway the Sceptre over these Lands! The giving an *Admonition* or a *Rebuke* before a General Assembly, or the Censure of Suspension, yea no corporal Punishment, will make Men of Conscience go over the Belly of Conscience to obey the Orders of the highest *Oecumenical Council*, or sovereign Potentate.

And so much for Answer to your *Second Request*, namely, that I would give you an Account of the Arguments I have heard adduced for censuring such Brethren

thren as had not Freedom to obey the Sentences of Assemblies, enjoining them to concur in settling Ministers, when the Body of a Congregation are openly opposite to his Settlement; and so much also for what I think may be answered unto these Arguments.

*Tim.* I am fully satisfied, your Answers are such as cannot easily be answered; and I return you many Thanks for the Pains you have taken in answering my first and second Requests. And, if it would not be an Abuse of your Patience, I have a *Third* Request, which is, that you may be pleased to narrate what were the Arguments adduced, or which you think may be adduced, against censuring such Brethren as had not Freedom in Conscience to obey the General Assembly concurring in such Settlements, while the Congregation is openly against the Candidate to be ordained; desiring also to know what Arguments may be adduced for private Judgment, and against blind Obedience.

*Iren.* Dear *Timothy*, had Circumstances allowed, I should cheerfully granted this your Desire also; and if nothing come in the Way to hinder, I am content to wait on you To-morrow by Eight of the Clock in the Morning.

*Tim.* That pleases me extremely. Adieu.



## DIALOGUE II.

T I M O T H E U S.

GOOD Morning, *Ireneus*, I hope all are well at home.

I R E N E U S.

I desire to be thankful all are in ordinary. Now let me know what was your *Third* Request.

*Tim.* My *Third* Request was, That you may be pleased to give an Account of the Arguments adduced at the last Assembly against censuring those Brethren, who had not Freedom in their own Minds to obey the Injunction of the Assembly 1750, whereby they were required to concur in the Settlement of Parishes without the Congregation's Consent; and also I desire to know what was said at that Assembly, or what you think may be said, in Vindication of *private Judgment*, and against the *Popish* Doctrine of *blind Obedience* to the Commands of the highest Church Judicatures upon Earth.

*Iren.* If that be your *Third* Request, then there are two Sorts of Arguments here to be adduced: the first Sort is against censuring any *Presbyterians* in the Church of *Scotland* in such a Case; and the second Sort are of a more general Nature, being in Defence of the Doctrine of *private Judgment*, and against yielding *blind Obedience* to any mere Creature.

*Tim.* Before you proceed to any of these Arguments, I have two or three Things to ask; as, 1. I desire to know what you mean by *private Judgment*.

*Iren.* By private Judgment I understand the Judgment, Sentiment and Mind of Persons in a private Capacity; their Judgment of Things commanded or forbidden by Superiors, whether in Church or State. And this private Judgment is the same with what we term the *Judgment of Discretion*; and it is opposed to publick Judgment, which is the Judgment of our Superiors, whether in Civil or Ecclesiastical Judicatures.

D

*Tim.*

*Tim.* I ask also what you mean by *blind Obedience*.

*Iren.* By this I mean, the yielding Obedience when one cannot see the Lawfulness of the Command requiring that Obedience.

*Tim.* I have a 3d Question to ask here, which is, Whether is private Judgment to be our Rule in obeying, or refusing Obedience to the Injunctions or Commands of our Superiors?

*Iren.* For Answer I say, Private Judgment may be said to be the Rule; but not what is called *regula regulans*, or Rule ruling; but *regula regulata*, or a Rule ruled: For this Rule of private Judgment is to be ruled by the Word of God; yet it is a Rule against which we can never act lawfully, in Obedience to the Commands of the highest of Mortals; private Judgment being the Dictate of Conscience, God's Deputy in the Soul, is never to be thwarted.

*Tim.* Now be pleased to proceed to your first Sort of Arguments.

*Iren.* As to the *first* Kind, 1<sup>st</sup>, It may be pleaded, and was pleaded at the last Assembly, That to concur in such Settlements, is to go contrary to sundry Acts of our General Assemblies in former Times, and some of them enacted in the very best Times that ever the Church of *Scotland* had since our *Reformation* from Popery; as, 1. To the Act of our General Assembly 1578, when she approved of the second Book of *Discipline*, in which it is affirmed, "That in the Order of Election, it is to be eschewed, that any Person be intruded into any Office of the Kirk contrary to the Will of the Congregation to which they are appointed, or without the Voice of the Eldership." Again, 2. That famous reforming Assembly, which met at *Glasgow* in 1638, in their Act anent *presenting of Pastors to particular Congregations*, they expressly enjoin that there be a Respect had to the Congregation; and "that no Person be intruded into any Office of the Kirk contrair to the will of the Congregation to which they are appointed:" I'm sure both these Acts are still in Force having never been rescinded. Again,

3. The

3. The General Assembly 1736 renewed or revived those *Acts*, discharging "all Settlements without the Will of the People to which the Minister was appointed:" And all these three *Acts* were made at Times when the Civil Law for Patronages was in as full Force as at this Day; for till 1649, Patronages were never abolished in *Scotland*. Now, such Brethren might justly think, as it was impossible for them to obey the *Acts* of Assembly 1578, 1636, and 1736, which indeed are to the same Purpose, and also to obey the Assembly 1750, whose Command was directly contrair upon the Matter to the first three; these being most agreeable to *Presbyterian* Principles, they could not but think those three first were rather to be obeyed than the last.

Such among us as pretend Zeal for observing the Rules of *Society*, should have regard to this and other fundamental *Rules* laid down by the Church of *Scotland*; and such repeated Rules of our General Assemblies are either a Part of our *Constitution*, or it is a Jest to say we have any *Constitution*. I think each of those *Acts* is of as much Force obliging us to obey, as the late *Act* 1750; and tho' it were not so much, yet here it might be said, *Quæ non prosunt singula, juncta juvant*.

*Tim*. I think that Argument is of Weight, as I judge such old *Acts* to be a Part of the *Constitution* of this Church.

*Iren*. I proceed to a 2d Argument against censuring such Brethren, which was this, namely, That to censure them, would be to act against the Doctrine of our *Confession of Faith*, and be a Practice tending to destroy Liberty of Conscience and sound Reason also. The 2d Section of the 20th Chapter of that *Confession* was cited for Proof hereof, and was read in open Assembly, where it is said, "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men, which are in any Thing contrary to his Word, or beside it in Matters of Faith or Worship; so that to believe such Doctrines, or obey such Commands out of Conscience, is to betray true Liberty of Conscience. And the requiring an implicate Faith and



“ an absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty  
 “ of Conscience and Reason also.” The last Clause  
 of that Section respects the whole of our Practice where-  
 in Conscience is concerned; and it is not to be restricted  
 to Matters of Faith or Worship. Such Brethren as were  
 censured, surely it was because they would not act from  
*blind Obedience*, obeying the Sentence of the former  
 Assemblies, while they could not see the Justice and  
 Equity of the Command; and such censuring must be  
 constructed a destroying of true Liberty of Conscience,  
 and sound Reason also, and so be judged an acting  
 against our *Confession of Faith*, to the Doctrines of which,  
 all the Ministers of this Church, and also the Elders  
 therein, stand engaged.

But further, the censuring of those Brethren is not  
 only against our *Confession of Faith* in the 20th Chapter,  
 but also against it in the 31st Chapter, in the 4th Section  
 of which it is affirmed “ of all Synods or Councils since  
 “ the Apostles Times they may err, and many have  
 “ erred, and *therefore they are not to be made the Rule*  
 “ *of Faith or Practice.*” The Expression says plainly  
 they are not to be obeyed with blind Obedience, their  
 bare Commands are far from being sufficient Warrant  
 for our being obedient to them; And this being the  
 Doctrine of our *Confession of Faith*, Ministers having  
 come under Obligations both at Licencing and Ordina-  
 tion, to assert, maintain and defend the Doctrines con-  
 tained in that *Confession*, surely they ought to stand up  
 in Vindication of this Truth.

*Tim.* What you say there to me appears unanswer-  
 able. Let me hear your 3d Argument against censuring  
 those Brethren.

*Iren.* A 3d Argument against censuring those Mini-  
 sters for their Disobedience in such a Case was, That  
 the Church of *Scotland* hath plainly declared we are  
 only to obey our Superiors in the Church *according to*  
*the Word of God.* As in the 1st Paragraph of the 2d  
 Chapter of our 2d *Book of Discipline*; where it is said,  
 “ In the Policy of Kirk, some are appointed to be Ru-  
 “ lers, and the rest of the Members to be ruled and  
 “ obey

" obey according to the Word of God, Inspiration of  
 " his Spirit, always under one Head and chief Gover-  
 " nor *Christ Jesus*." Now, tho' the Members of infe-  
 rior Church Judicatures are under the Rules of the su-  
 perior to obey them, yet 'tis only *according to the Word*  
*of God*. And our *Confession of Faith* declares, that  
 " the Decrees and Determinations of *Synods and Coun-*  
 " *cils* are to be received with Reverence and Submis-  
 " sion if consonant to the Word of God:" That is  
 the Condition upon which they are to be received with  
 Respect and Reverence, *if consonant to the Word of God*:  
 And our old *Confession of Faith*, drawn up by the Barons  
 and Ministers of this Church, ratified in Parliament  
*July 17th 1560*, says the same in the plainest Terms  
 in the 20th Chap. when treating of *general Councils*,  
*their Power and Authority*, they express themselves thus,  
 " Without just Examination dare we not receive what-  
 " soever is obtruded upon us by Men under the Name  
 " of general Councils; for plain it is, as they were  
 " Men, so have some of them manifestly erred, and that  
 " in Matters of great Weight and Importance. So  
 " far then as the Council proveth the Determination  
 " and Commandment that it giveth by the plain Word  
 " of God, so soon do we reverence and embrace the  
 " same." The Church of *England* in the 34 of her  
 39 Articles says, " Whosoever thro' his private Judg-  
 " ment willingly and purposely doth openly break the  
 " Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be  
 " not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained  
 " and approved by common Authority, ought to be re-  
 " buked openly." Now according to that *Article*, in  
 my Opinion, 'tis only if such Things in the Church of  
*England* as are enjoined by Authority be agreeable to  
 God's Word, that they are to be obeyed. The Expres-  
 sion says, If they be repugnant to the Word of God,  
 tho' enjoined by publick Authority, no Censure is to be  
 inflicted, albeit they be not observed or obeyed. And  
 in that Article it is enjoined, that nothing be ordained  
 against the Word of God. Whatever her Practice be,  
 surely herein so far she is in the Right.

Tim.

*Tim.* You know she imposes many Things which we think are far from being required by the Word of God.

*Iren.* I acknowledge she enjoins sundry Things under severe Pains and Penalties, which in my Opinion are not only without Foundation in the Word of God, but plainly against it.

*Tim.* If it would not divert too much from our present Business, I would be content to hear some of those Things.

*Iren.* Then to particularize some of them in a few Words, 1. She admits no Man to baptise without using the Sign of the Cross, a Thing never commanded nor practised by Christ, nor any of his Disciples. 2. None are allowed to preach the Gospel of Christ, unless he put on a white Surplice, which neither Christ nor any of his Apostles ever did. 3. She will admit none to partake in the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper unless he kneel in receiving; a Practice without Scripture, Precept or Example. 4. She obligeth all Ministers to pronounce such as they baptise to be regenerated by the Holy Ghost, tho' as far from Regeneration, may be, as was *Simon Magus* after his Baptism. 5. That Ministers are obliged to give Thanks to God for all whom they bury as *Brethren whom God hath taken to himself*, so the Devil never gets so much as one Soul that dies and is buried by the Church of *England* Ministers. 6. That Ministers are obliged to give the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper to all that ask it to qualify for a *civil* Office, tho' openly profane and grossly ignorant. 7. They will allow none to preach the Gospel of Christ who will not subscribe, that there is nothing in all the Book of *Common Prayer*, in the Book of *Ordination*, and in the 39 *Articles* of the Church of *England* that's contrary to the Word of God.

*Tim.* Now go on to another Argument.

*Iren.* 4thly, It was argued in the last Assembly, That it is not to be admired tho' Ministers had not Freedom to go in with the Assemblies Sentences, concurring in the Settlement of such Parishes, considering, that these Settlements were enjoined when there was nothing like  
the



*The Assent of the People* of that Parish to the Candidate to be placed over them; in regard the Church of Scotland hath plainly declared, that such Settlements as want the *Assent* of the People, are evidently *against the Word of God*, the Scriptures of infallible Truth. And having cited the 11th 12th 13th and 14th Paragraphs of the 12th Chapter of our 2d Book of Discipline, 1st Impression; for Proof of this, that Citation with the Assembly's Consent was read, which runs thus, "The Liberty of the Election of Persons, called to Ecclesiastical Functions, and observed without Interruption so long as the Kirk was not corrupted by *Antichrist*, we desire to be restored and retained within this Realm.

"So that none be intruded upon any Congregation either by the Prince or any inferior Person, without lawful Election and the Assent of the People over whom the Person is placed, as the Practice of the Apostolical and primitive Kirk and good Order craves.

"And because this Order which God's Word craves, cannot stand with Patronages and Presentation to Benefices used in the Pope's Kirk, we desire all them that truly fear God, earnestly to consider, that for as much as the Names of Patronages and Benefices, together with the Effect thereof, have flowed from the Pope and Corruption of the Canon Law only, in so far as thereby any Person was intruded or placed over Kirks having *curiam animarum*.

"And for as much as that Manner of proceeding hath no Ground in the Word of God, but is contrary to the same, and to the said Liberty of Election, they ought not now to have Place in this Light of Reformation. And therefore, whosoever will embrace God's Word, and desire the Kingdom of his Son Christ Jesus to be advanced, they will also embrace and receive that Policy and Order which the Word of God and upright Estate of his Kirk craves, otherwise it is in vain that they have profest the same."

While this Citation was reading, there was a Cry from sundry Corners of the Assembly-House as if the Citation had

had been most impertinent; but I am perswaded you will see it to be very pertinent and of full Force for proving the Point for which it was adduced: For, if the Practice of the apostolical and primitive Kirk required, that the Assent of the People over which the Person is placed should be had; and if Patronages be not only without Foundation in God's Word, but contrary to it, being in such direct Opposition to our *Books of Discipline*; no wonder than those Ministers scrupled to concur in the least with such Settlements; and if Patronages and the settling of Ministers without the Assent of the People was contrary to the Word of God in 1578 'tis so still; *For the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations*; not so much as a Shadow of turning with him.

*Tim.* I would fain know of what Authority that 2d Book of *Discipline* is to us, being of such an ancient Date.

*Iren.* If you please you may consult *Calderwood's History*, on whose Account of such Matters we may depend, the Book having been several Times revised and examined by the Church of *Scotland*, and at length approved for the Press; and there 'tis shown, this Book was agreed to by the Church of *Scotland* in 1578, after sundry Conferences and often Disputations and reasoning in many Assemblies. And for Proof of this they may also look to the Author of the *modest and humble Enquiry concerning the Power of electing Ministers*, published in the 1732, who having given Testimony to these things, tho' writing against the *Peoples Right*, he also affirms, that this Book was sworn to in our *National Covenant*, which, says he, *adds a considerable Weight to what is contained in that Book* †. Further, for Proof of this they may see *Introduction to the Commissions Overtures* printed 1719, transmitted to Presbyteries to be considered by them, and returned with their Opinion and Remarks to the next General Assembly, where it is said, "The General Assembly  
" judging it necessary to clear up and confirm the several  
" Parts of Church Government in a Conformity to  
" the

\* the Principles and Constitution of this Church, as laid  
 “ down according to the Rule of God’s Word in the  
 “ *Book of Discipline*, which was agreed upon in the  
 “ Assembly 1578, inserted in the Registers of Assembly  
 “ 1581, Sess. 9, sworn to in the National Covenant,  
 “ revived and ratified by the Assembly 1638, Sess. 21,  
 “ and by many other Acts of Assembly, &c.” That  
 Commission might have added in particular, Sess. 16,  
 of that Assembly 1638, where speaking of the Work  
 of Reformation being brought to such Perfection as it  
 was at that Time, the Assembly says, “ This Kirk was  
 “ reformed not only in Doctrine and Worship, but also  
 “ after many Conferences and publick Reasonings in  
 “ divers National Assemblies, joined with many solemn  
 “ Humiliations and Prayers to God, the Discipline and  
 “ Government of the Kirk, as the Hedge and Guard of  
 “ the Doctrine and Worship, was prescribed according  
 “ to the Rule of God’s Word in the Book of Policy and  
 “ Discipline agreed upon in the Assembly 1578, and  
 “ insert in the Register 1581, established by the Acts  
 “ of Assembly, by the Confession of Faith, sworn and  
 “ subscribed at the Direction of Assembly, and by con-  
 “ tinual Practice of this Kirk.” I never heard of any  
 that had the Confidence to deny that this 2d *Book of*  
*Discipline* is still in Force in this Church; and if any  
 should deny that it is still in Force, then to me ’tis further  
 evident by what we have from the General Assembly 1705,  
 in their *Advertisement* affixed to the *Larger Overtures*,  
 where they say, “ Several Assemblies nominate Com-  
 “ mittees for considering the said Overtures and Ani-  
 “ madversions made thereupon, and to compare them  
 “ with the Word of God, Books of Discipline, and Acts  
 “ of General Assemblies of this Church, and to consider  
 “ what was wanting in or to be added to the said Over-  
 “ tures.” Now, from that *Advertisement* ’tis evident  
 sundry Assemblies since 1696 (at which Time those  
 Overtures were first given in and taken under the As-  
 sembly’s Consideration) have looked on these Books of  
 Discipline, and this 2d Book in particular, to be of such  
 Force and Authority in this Church, as to be consulted



in making *Regulations* and binding Rules for her Members in all Time coming, being in my Opinion, a clear Witness, yea, and a Judge giving Sentence against all such in the Church of *Scotland* as stand up for, or approve of, vindicate, or give Countenance to any such Settlement as hath not *the Assent of the People* of that Congregation where the Minister is to be settled.

*Tim.* I own these are very clear pointed Proofs of the Obligation of that Book of Discipline, and against all Settlements *invito grege*, or without the Assent of the People.

*Iren.* I proceed now to a 5<sup>th</sup> Argument against the censuring these Brethren; and it was, That they could not see how any *pastoral Relation* could be fixed between a Minister and the People of a Parish, they being openly opposite to him for their Pastor; this having been the Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland* in former Times, that the People's Consent is essential to the constituting a pastoral Relation betwixt a Minister and a Christian People who are capable and willing to chuse a Pastor to themselves. The Reverend Principal *Rule*, who a little after the Revolution was chosen by the Church of *Scotland* to write in her Vindication from the Aspersions which were cast upon her by some slanderous Pamphlets, as that intituled *The Case of the afflicted Clergy*, when speaking of the *Episcopal Clergy* ejected at the Revolution, says, There was never a Relation of Pastor and People between them and those Flocks; they, *viz.* the People, having never consented to such a Relation: And, in his *Good old Way defended*, p. 263, says, "By the Suffrage of the *antient* Church, which was positive, plain and unanimous in this, that the People should choose their own Bishop, and other Church Officers; he affirms, that the antient Church did never own a pastoral Relation, in any Man, to a People, on whom he was thrust by the Magistrate, or any Power not properly Ecclesiastical, and without their own Consent." The Synod of *Fife*, in 1716, made an *Act*, in which the Synod recommends "to all Presbyteries within their Bounds, that

“ that they have a special Care not to plant a Minister until they have the Desire and Choice of, at least, the Generality of the People made known unto them, as being the proper Ground for founding the pastoral Relation.” And I humbly think the following General Assembly, by approving their Register, approved of this Principle; as our Divines affirm, there is a Marriage-like Relation between a Pastor and the People, so *consensus facit matrimonium*.

*Tim.* I own, that as it would be an unaccountable Thing for any to force the Bridegroom to match against his Will, so it is as unaccountable to force the Bride. That worthy Divine, Principal *Forrester*, says \* “The People’s Right to call their Pastors is rationally, and in Divine Right, pleaded from that near and Marriage like Relation which is between the Pastor and Flock.”

*Iren.* That eminent Divine *Ames* or *Amesius*, who, if I rightly remember, was called by *Edward VI.* to be a Professor of Divinity in *Cambridge*, and after that was settled Professor at *Franeker*, and was a Member of the Synod of *Dort*, says † *Voluntaria illa relatio*, &c. “That voluntary Relation which is between a Minister and a Church cannot have another Foundation than voluntary Election; a free Church, while her Liberty is safe, cannot be subjected to any but by free Election.”

*Tim.* Be pleased to go on.

*Iren.* Then there is a 6th Argument which might been pleaded, or may be pleaded in the like Case, namely, That to go in with any such Settlement as is without the Congregation’s Consent, is to go contrary to Ordination Engagements.

*Tim.* Let me know how you document that.

*Iren.* Ministers, at their Ordination, come under Obligations and Engagements to “maintain, support and defend our Discipline, which they profess to be-

E 2

“ lieve

\* Append. p. 262.

† Cal. Consc. p. m. 322.

" lieve is founded upon the Word of God, and agree-  
 " able thereto; promising to submit unto it, and  
 " concur therewith, and never to endeavour, directly  
 " nor indirectly, the Prejudice or Subversion thereof."  
 Now, by the *Discipline* of this Church, which at our  
 Ordination we thus engage to maintain, not only the  
 Discipline of the Church concerning censuring the scan-  
 dalous, but also those Principles and Truths which are con-  
 tained in our *Books of Discipline*, especially in the 2d Book,  
 are meant, to which, as the Church of *Scotland* asserts,  
 People stand bound by the *National Covenant*; and the  
 Principles contained in that Book concerning the Ele-  
 ction and Ordination of Ministers, is in particular a Part  
 of our Discipline, when the Word *Discipline* is taken  
 in a larger Sense, as surely it is in our Ordination En-  
 gagements. Mr. *George Gillespie*, in his *Dispute against*  
*the English Ceremonies*, when speaking of the Word  
*Discipline* \*, says, "Howsoever in Ecclesiastical Use it  
 " signify oftentimes that Policy which standeth in the  
 " censuring of Manners, yet in the Oath (*that is, the*  
 " *National Covenant*) it must be taken in the largest  
 " Sense, namely for the whole Policy of the Church;  
 " for the whole Policy of this Church did at that  
 " Time go under the Name of Discipline; and these  
 " two Books, wherein this Policy is contained, were  
 " called *The Books of Discipline*." Now, both these  
 Books treat of the *Election* and *Ordination* of Ministers  
 at some Length. And it is noticeable, that in all these  
 Books, which the Church of *Scotland* hath termed  
*Books of Discipline*, there is very little said in either of  
 them concerning *Church Censures*, or the censuring of  
 scandalous Persons. That worthy Servant of Christ,  
 Mr. *Alexander Henderson*, Moderator to the famous  
*Glasgow* Assembly, which met 1638, who surely under-  
 stood the Meaning of the Word *Discipline* as well as  
 many, according to him the Election of Ministers is a  
 Part of our *Discipline*; for in that little Tractate of his  
 intituled, *The Government and Order of the Church of*  
*Scotland*, published first in 1641, for Information of  
 the



the *English* anent the Government of this Church, and for removing or preventing their Prejudices against it, having in the 7th Page, last Impression, asserted, that here, to wit, in the Church of *Scotland*, no Man is obtruded upon the People against their open or tacit Consent and Approbation, in the 9th Page says, "This Liberty of Election is in Part prejudged and hindred by Patronages and Presentations, which are still in Use there, not by the Rules of *their Discipline*, but by Toleration of that which they cannot amend." Now, by the *Rules of their Discipline*, he cannot only mean Discipline for censuring the scandalous, but also and chiefly their *Rules* laid down by the Church of *Scotland* anent the Election of Pastors, in her *Books of Discipline*, and Acts of General Assemblies; for it is of this Election he is speaking in that Place. And that the Word *Discipline* is still taken sometimes in this larger Sense, is evident from the Title which the Church of *Scotland* in 1705 gave to the larger Overtures, when she termed them, *Overtures concerning the Discipline and Method of proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Judicatures of the Church of Scotland*; for a whole Section of those Overtures is spent on the Subject of *vacant Congregations*, and *planting them with Ministers*. The once famous Church of *France* take the Word *Discipline* in this larger Sense; for the whole Policy of that Church is termed *The Discipline of the Reformed Churches of France*, which, according to *Quick* in his *Synodicon*, consists of no less than 40 Folio Pages, and the first Chapter begins with the Licensing, Election and Ordination of Ministers. Again, in the 17th Chapter, 5th Paragraph, of their 4th National Synod, where they express themselves thus; "Our Brethren, the Pastors of *Geneva*, shall be entreated to write us their Judgment about some particular Points of Church Discipline, as about Elections of Church Officers, and the Sentence of Excommunication \*:" There the Words are so plain for our Sense, that they need not a Commentary,

Now,

\* *Quick's Synod.* p. 45.

Now, all the *Ruling Elders* of our General Assemblies should mind, that by subscribing the *Formula*, they come under Obligations "to the outmost of their Power, to assert, maintain and defend this Discipline, and submit unto it, guarding against doing any Thing that is either directly or indirectly to the Prejudice or Subversion thereof;" as is, in my Opinion, the countenancing any violent Settlement, which hath at least an indirect Tendency to prejudge Elections, which are a Part of our Discipline.

*Tim.* I see that in most Writings anent the Affairs of the Church, the Word *Discipline* is taken in that larger Sense, as doth the learned *Dupin* again and again, in his *Abridgment* of Church History. But proceed.

*Iren.* A 7th Argument that was or may be adduced against censuring these Brethren was this, That the Settlements being made upon little more than bare *Presentations*, they might justly had a Scruple to concur therein, in regard that by the Church of Scotland Patronages have been declared to be "an inevitable Obstruction to the Work of the Gospel, and evidently prejudicial thereto; while it is known, that many are the lamentable Abuses wherewith they have been attended, having often laid Foundations for *Simonical Pactions* between Patrons and those presented by them;" which Things were asserted by the *Commission* 1711 in their *Address* to Queen Anne, and for which they were approved by the Assembly 1712, who did registrate that *Address* with their Acts of Assembly that Year. These Things being considered, and that, according to my Information, Patronages are like to bring in a corrupt Ministry into this Church; it is no great Wonder than those Ministers had a Scruple to concur in the least with such Settlements; the Church of Scotland having in 1578, as shown already, declared Patronages to be contrary to God's Word, as did also the State in 1649; for when *Patronages* were abolished that Year, the *Parliament* declared them to be *unlawful and unwarrantable by God's Word, and contrary to the Doctrine and Liberties of this Kirk*; and that

that *Parliament* declared, *none is to be obtruded against the Will of the Congregation.*

*Tim.* Whether is it not reasonable and just, that such Gentlemen or others as have endowed Churches, or bought the Right of Patronages, should have a Power to present Candidates for the Ministry in Case of a Vacancy?

*Iren.* Some have stood for the Affirmative here, as did *Stillingfleet* after his Advancement to a Bishoprick, who asserted, "That the Liberality of the Northern Princes, in endowing Churches, was Ground of their interposing in the Election of Ministers, so as to take the Power of Election out of the People's Hand." To which Principal *Rule* answered, saying, \* "The Liberality of Princes was no sufficient Price to purchase Gospel Privileges from them that Christ had granted them unto, more than *Jacob's* Potage was for *Esau's* Birthright:" And (adds he) "it is a Conceit unworthy of a *Divine*, and only fit for a *Simon Magus*, to say, that the Liberality of Princes, or others, to a Church, can entitle them to be Masters of her Privileges: Shall spiritual Privileges be purchased with Money?" And there he asserts, That the Election of Church Officers is the People's Right, by Christ's Institution. *Calderwood*, in his *Altare Damascenum* †, says, "Truly he that will not build Churches, assign Stipends, and minister Expences to Clergymen, unless upon Condition that he acquire Power over the Church, *Simoniacum est, impium est*, but neither godly nor religious."

*Tim.* I see, as you affirm, the Commission in 1711, they speak of Patronages as occasioning the Evil of *Simoniacal Practices*; but whether can you think they have ever occasioned any such cursed Practices in this Church of late, when Presentations are so ordinary?

*Iren.* I can say nothing of that sinful Practice from my own Knowledge, tho' there is no little Talk of it: And I could name a Patron of my own Acquaintance, who

\* Rat. Def. of Nonconfor.

† Page 591.



who not long ago was offered a handsome Compliment from one, and 3000 Merks from another for his Presentation; but he was so honest as to reject both Offers with disdain and abhorrence. But I go on to instance an, 8th Argument, which was to this Purpose, That such Brethren could not be justly censured, considering the great Danger many of the People, of their respective Charges, were in of leaving them, and this Church, and going off to the *Secession*, if they should countenance any such Settlement as is over the Belly of the Congregation. Surely it is to be lamented, that many amongst us have so little Concern about that Matter, of People's going off to the *Secession*, that they declare openly, They value not how many go off to it, saying, the Church would be better to want them: But such are very unlike to him, on whom *the Care of all the Churches came daily*; who said, *who is weak, and I am not weak, who is offended, and I burn not* \*. Do not People sin against the God of Order in walking disorderly, by going off to the *Secession*, when no sinful Terms of Communion are required? And doth not their Practice offend those faithful Ministers to whose Ministry they have promised Subjection *in the Lord*? And is not their Conduct in separating from this Church a Sin, their Practice being directly contrary to the Apostle's solemn Intreaty in the Name of the Lord *Jesus Christ* to the Church of *Corinth*, which is equal to a solemn Charge, † *I beseech you, in the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that there be no Divisions* (or *Schisms*, as the Word properly signifies) *among you*? And there were sundry as gross Faults in the Church of *Corinth* at that Time, as are among Ministers in this Church. However, Ministers are to mind all are discharged from *putting a Stumbling Block, or any Occasion to fall, in their Brother's Way* ‡; and People would mind, tho' the Church of *Sardis* had generally defiled their Garments; yet the few Names in her that had not defiled theirs, were approven of *Zion's King*, and assured they should

\* 2 Cor. 11. 28, 29.

† 1 Cor. 1. 10.

‡ Rom. 14. 13.

should walk with him *in white* in the heavenly Zion above. Now, shall such Things be light to us? Yet *Seceders* have no Ground to boast, nor have People Ground to join them, as if they might be assured of having always the Choice of their own Pastors with them; for Instances can be given, where their People have complained, that they had not the free Choice, but the Candidates were settled contrary to the Inclinations of many of them, to gratify some of higher Office and Station among them.

*Tim.* I acknowledge Ministers of the Gospel should be very tender in giving Offence to any of the weakest among Christ's *little Ones*. But be pleased to go on.

*Iren.* 9thly, It might been argued against censuring of such Brethren, That perhaps they thought, for them to concur in any such Settlement, looked too like the *removing the antient Land-marks which our Fathers have set*, which is forbidden, *Prov.* 22. 28. Such Settlements, as are without the Congregation's Consent, being directly contrary to the declared Principle and Practice of the Church of *Scotland* in all former Times, since the *Reformation* from *Popery*; yea, I may say, in all Times since Christ had a Church in *Scotland*, if it was not sometimes under *Prelacy*. The Principle and Practice of the Church of *Scotland* in former Times, as to the Election of Ministers, was, that the People have the Right of Election, at least in so far as no Man was to be placed over them without their Consent. *Hector Boethius*, that learned Principal of the College of *Aberdeen*, affirms, that till the Days of *Palladius*, in the 5th Century, our Pastors were chosen by the *Suffrages of the People*; and this was for more than 200 Years after the Gospel was received in *Scotland*, which was in the Reign of *Donald I.* in the Beginning of the Third Century. And that learn'd Gentleman Sir *James Dalrymple*, in his Writings, shews, that in the Days of the *Culdees*, there was no Settlement of Pastors without the Consent of the *Laicks* of the Place.

*Tim.* I would be content to have the History of the  
F
Regulations

Regulations made in the Church of *Scotland* since the Reformation from Popery about 1560.

*Iren.* I am ready to gratify you in that. The several Instances of those Regulations are as follow.

1. The Book of *Common Order*, composed by our first Reformers, which was a Regulation for some Time in this Church, gave the Election to the *whole Congregation*; for in the Beginning of that Paragraph which treats of the Election of Pastors, it says, "That the Ministers and Elders, at such Time as there wants a Minister, they are to assemble the *whole Congregation*, exhorting them to advise and consider who may best serve in that Room;" citing on the Margin *Acts* 14. 23. a Scripture which is cited by all that write for the People's Right to elect their Pastors.

2. Our 1st *Book of Discipline*, mainly composed by *John Knox*: *Spotiswood* says, "It was framed by him in Imitation of the Reformed Churches of *Germany*, and partly of that he had seen at *Geneva*." This Book gives the Election to the People; for, in the 4th *Head*, which treats of the lawful Election of Ministers, it is affirmed, "It appertaineth to the People, and to every several Congregation, to elect their Minister;—for altogether this is to be avoided, that any Man be violently intruded or thrust in upon any Congregation; but this Liberty, with all Care, must be reserved to every several Church, to have their Votes and Suffrages in Election of their Ministers." This Book, at a *Convention* holden at *Edinburgh* in the Month of *January* 1560, was subscribed by a great Part of the Nobility, as *Duke Hamilton*, the Earls of *Arran*, *Argyle*, *Glencairn*, *Marshall*, *Monteith*, *Mortoun*, *Roths*, *Lord James*, *Lord Yester*, *Lord Lindsay*, *Lord Boyd*, *Lord Ochiltree*, the Master of *Maxwel*, and Master of *Lindsay*, Barons *Drumlanrick*, *Bargainie*, and many others, who acknowledged the Book to be good, and according to God's Word, promising to set the same forward to the utmost of their Power. Our Nobility, Gentry, Ministers, and others that stood for the



the *Reformation* in those Days, desired that the Election of Ministers might be by the People.

3. Our 2d Book of *Discipline*, which in 1578 was agreed to by the Church of *Scotland*, makes the Consent of the People essential to the Calling of Gospel Ministers, when it affirms, That "Election is the chusing out of a Person or Persons, most able to the Office that vaikes, by the Judgment of the Eldership, and Consent of the Congregation, to which shall be the Person or Persons appointed." And again that Book says, "In the Order of Election it is to be eschew'd, that any Person be intruded into any Office of the Kirk, contrary to the Will of the Congregation, to which they are appointed, or without the Voice of the Eldership." As this Book was sworn to in the National Covenant, so the first Book was approved by Act of the secret Council, and subscribed by them.

4. There was a *Regulation* made anent the Election of Ministers by the Assembly in 1642, Patronages by the Civil Law being still in Force, and probably urged more warmly at this Time than formerly. By this Regulation every Presbytery, in which there was a Vacancy, was obliged to give the King, and so to other Patrons also, a List of six Expectants, or actual Ministers, all willing to accept of the Presentation, that the Patron might have his Choice of them. This, I acknowledge, was a very great Incroachment upon the People's Liberty; yet not so great an Incroachment as are many of our Settlements at this Day; for that List of Six which was to be made up by the Presbytery, was also to be made up with the Consent of the *most or best Part of the Congregation*; and this might give Freedom to Candidates to accept of the Presentation, that the People had already given their Consent to his being one of the Six put upon the Leet, that the Patron might take his Choice.

5. Our next *Regulation* anent the Election of Ministers was in the Year 1649, at which Time our Assembly drew up a *Directory* anent this, which was much the same with that in the 2d Book of *Discipline*, giving the Election to the *Session of the Congregation*,

*tion, and Consent unto the People; for the Election was not valid unless the major Part of the People of the Congregation did acquiesce and consent to the Person agreed upon by the Session; if the lesser Part of the People or Session dissented from the Session's Election, then indeed they were obliged to bring relevant Exceptions against the Candidate, and also to verify them to the Presbytery: Those Exceptions being to be relevant, say, they were to be such as deserved Censure if proven, and so behaved to be Exceptions against the Man's Doctrine, or his moral Conversation: But nothing like that was required of the major Part of the People or Congregation, if they excepted against the Session's Choice, the Presbytery did not oblige them to bring such relevant Exceptions, no, they were to appoint a new Moderation in that Case, unless the Dissent of the major Part of the Congregation was founded upon causeless Prejudices.*

*Tim.* What think you might they intend by *causeless Prejudices*?

*Iren.* In my Opinion they are such, as the Candidate his being of meaner Parentage; his being *educated in Principles not so sound*, tho' he had sincerely renounced them, as having been *prelatick* in his Judgment; so his having evidenced some *Levity in his Conversation* in his younger Years, tho' now living in all Gravity; or his having used or *still using something they esteemed less grave and decent*, or less becoming in his Garb; his having something like a *distorted Countenance* in praying or preaching; his *using too much or too little Motion in the Pulpit*; his being in their Esteem *too bulky or corpulent*; his *having a Limp in his Walk*, or *not so straight in his Back*, or his not having so good a *coram vobis*; his being of a *little Stature* as in the Case of the *Apostle Paul*, who is said to have been *homo tri-cubitalis*, at which 'tis like some among the *Corinthians* took Exception, saying, *his bodily Presence is weak*\*; or his not having such a volubility of speaking as some others, for which perhaps those *Corinthians* said of *Paul*, *his Speech is contemptible*; or a Man's having *lived in some meaner*

*Sta-*

\* 2 Cor. 10. 10.

*Station*; or had had his Residence in less desirable Company for some time, as in *Justinian's Days*, who made a Law, "That none who had been Soldiers, or had had any Offices about their Courts might be ordained till they had not only got their Dimission, but also had been 15 Years in a Monastery †." Now, all those and many such like are *causeless Prejudices*: But for People to declare, that such a Person's Gifts are not edifying to their Souls, or that they cannot find that Advantage by hearing him, as they find in hearing another, is not a *causeless Prejudice*. And so much said the learned Mr. Gillespie, in his *Tractate of the Election of Pastors with the Congregation's Consent*, who says, "Tho' nothing be objected against the Man's Doctrine or Life; yet if the People desire another better or as well qualified, by whom they find themselves more edified than by the other, that is a Reason sufficient, if a Reason must be given at all, and it is allowed, says he, by *Danæus*." And I add, this was allowed by the once famous Church of *France*, in the 1st Chapter of her *Discipline*, Canon 6th.

6. There was also an *Overture* for a *Regulation* in case of a *jus devolutum* made by the General Assembly 1731, which had the Force of an *interim Act* for one Year, and tho' this *Overture* gave the Election to *Protestant Heretors* and *Elders*, yet it affirmed, *the Elders do represent the People*; which in my Opinion was a plain owning, that it is the Peoples Right originally to elect their Pastors, and the Candidate chosen by that *Overture* and *interim Act* was to be proposed to the whole Congregation, to be either approved or disapproved by them; and in case of Disapprobation, the Disapprovers were to give in their Reasons to the Presbytery, without mentioning what Sort of Reasons they were to be.

7. There was a Regulation made in 1690, made not by the Church but by the State, by which "the Heritors of the Parish, being *Protestants*, with the *Elders*, were to name and propose the Person to the whole

† Pref. to Burnet's Vind. of the Eng. Ordinations.]



“ whole Congregation, ~~to~~ be either approved or disapproved by them ; and in case of their Disapprobation, they were to give in their Reasons to the Presbytery of the Bounds, to the Effect the Affair might be cognosced upon by them.” Now, according to this Act, Heretors and Elders had only the Power or Privilege of naming and proposing the Candidate for the Ministry. According to this Act, Heretors and Elders had not the Election ; for barely to nominate and propose a Person to the Congregation, is not to elect him. I acknowledge this gave them a *negative* upon the Congregation ; but then, according to the Words of that Act, the Congregation had also a Negative upon them ; for that Act did not oblige the People, in case of their Disapprobation, to libel the Candidate, and prove him guilty of Error or Immorality, no, for if they only declared to the Presbytery, that such a Person’s Gifts were not edifying to their Souls, and therefore they earnestly desired another, the Presbytery might have shewn such Regard to that Desire as to grant it ; and hence in those Times, or while that *Act* was in Force, which was until the Act establishing *Patronages* in 1712, the People were so much regarded, that it was rare if ever Presbyteries settled Ministers over the Belly of Congregations, who were willing to chuse and desirous to have Gospel Ministers of *our Communion* settled over them : Then no such Settlements as are some among us, upon little more than bare Presentations.

*Tim.* From your Historical Account of former Regulations in the Church of *Scotland*, the World may judge whether there is any just Ground to charge such as vindicate the Congregation’s Right to elect their own Pastors, or at least their Right to oppose the Settlement of any Minister over them without their Assent. Surely there is no Ground to charge them as venting or espousing of new Principles, or being for new Practices in the Election of Gospel Ministers.

*Iren.* Further, *rothly*, To affirm Ministers, Elders or others ought to obey the Sentences of superior Church-Judicatures when unjust, or when, upon serious Trial, they

they judge them to be such, is an Antipresbyterian Principle. The learned Mr. Gillespie, who may be allowed to have understood their Principles beyond many, in his *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, where instancing the Differences between the Prelatical and Presbyterian Government, of 20 Differences which there he mentioned, these are two :

" 1. That Prelates they intruded Pastors oft-times against the Consent of the Congregation, and *Reclamate Ecclesia*, which (says he) the Presbyterian Government doth not." 2. Says he, " The Prelates did not allow Men to examine by the Judgment of Christian and private Discretion, their Decrees and Canons, so as to search the Scriptures, and look at the Warrants ; but would needs have Men think it enough to know the Things to be commanded by them that are in Place and Power. Presbyterian Government doth not lord it over Men's Consciences, but admitteth (yea commendeth) the searching of the Scriptures, whether these Things which it holdeth forth be not so ; and doth not press Men's Consciences with *sic volo sic jubeo*, but desireth they may do in Faith what they do."

So those eminent Presbyterians, the *London Ministers*, in their *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, in which they write for the Divine Right of Presbyterian Government, showing at large what are their Principles, they affirm to the same Purpose, asserting, 1. That it is a Presbyterian Principle, that the People have the Right to choose their own Pastors ; for in the Preface to that Book, when making a Comparison between the Independent and the Presbyterian Government, they say, " What Excellency is there in all the Independent Government, save only in so far as it agrees with the Presbyterian Government, and only in so far as it is Presbyterian? " And having instanced three Things wherein Independents and Presbyterians agree, they say, " 4thly, Have they (*viz.* Independents) the Liberty of electing their own Officers, Pastors, Elders and Deacons? So have the Presbyterians." 2. As to the other Point in Controversy, in the 75th Page of that

Book

Book, they assert, "That the *Judgment of Discerning* belongs to every Christian, for the well ordering of his own Act;" terming the Man a *Brutum agens* who does whatever the Church enjoins. And speaking of the Power of Synods \*, they say, "Their Power is not absolute and infallible, but limited and fallible: Any Council or Synod may err, being constitute of Men that are weak, frail and ignorant in Part, &c. and therefore all their Decrees and Determinations are to be examined by the Touchstone of the Scriptures, nor are further to be embraced or counted obligatory than they are consonant thereunto, *Isa.* 8. 20." —

And then they say, "The Power of Synods is not only swasive and charitative, but it is a proper authoritative juridical Power, which all within their Bounds are obliged reverently to esteem, and dutifully to submit unto, so far as agreeable to the Word of Christ;" that's the just Limitation of all Obedience or Submission.

Again, *English Presbytery* in the 2d Page asserts, "That the ultimate Judgment of the Will of God revealed in the Scriptures, as to any Person's particular Practice, is his own practical Judgment or Conscience, after a due Enquiry into Scripture, and comparing Scripture with Scripture, and hearing and weighing the Judgment of others, as to Things, the believing or not believing, doing or not doing of which, may render his Soul guilty before God; and that altho' a Man's Conscience may err, yet no Christian ought to act contrary to the Dictate of it, whether it dictate upon probable or demonstrative Arguments, in Obedience to any Man, but ought rather to suffer any Thing shall be imposed upon him for not doing."

And in the 11th Page, when speaking of Obedience to the Civil Magistrate, 'tis said, "They believe it is their Duty only actively to obey Magistrates, in such Things which are not contrary to the Law of God; and whether they be contrary or no (as to their own Practice) they conceive their own Consciences must be Judges."

This little Piece was published at London 1680, for vindicating

\* Page 217.



dicating Presbyterians in *England*; in it they appeal to the Judgment of all sober Christians, what there is of Falshood or Unpeaceableness in their Principles. To go in with the Principle of blind Obedience to any human Judicatures, is to renounce a Presbyterian Principle. *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis.*

Now, from what hath been advanced from Mr. Gillespie, from the *London* Ministers, and from *English Presbytery*, upon this Argument, the World may see whether some of our younger Brethren, in Face of the last General Assembly, did not evidence their great Knowledge of and Acquaintance with what are the real Principles of Presbyterians, when they charged some of the Ministers of this Church as guilty of going in to the Independents, because they appeared for the People's Right to elect their own Pastors, and for the Doctrine of *private Judgment*, with respect to the Determinations or Injunctions of superior Church Judicatures.

I proceed then to an 11th Argument against censuring such Brethren as have not Freedom to go in with such Settlements as are violent; and it is to this Purpose, As it is a Protestant Principle, maintained by them against the Papists ever since the Reformation, that the People have Right to elect their Pastors; so those Ministers in the Presbyteries of *Perth*, *Linlithgow* and *Dunfermline*, might fear lest their countenancing violent Settlements should be a contradicting their Declaration made at their Ordination: at which time they solemnly renounced, as all *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Arminian*, *Bourignian*, and all other Doctrines, Tenets and Opinions whatsoever, which are contrary to and inconsistent with our *Confession of Faith*; so they professed to renounce all *Popish* Doctrines, Tenets and Opinions in particular. Now, I say, those Ministers might think, and that upon just Ground, for them to countenance such Settlements, would look too like a going in with a *Popish* Principle, in Opposition to the *Protestant* Doctrine anent the Election and Ordination of Ministers; the People having, according to the Generality of Protestants, a Right from CHRIST, the King of

Zion, to elect the Pastors and Overseers of their precious Souls, while *Romanists* or *Papists* generally deny this. The learned Mr. Gillespie says \*, "The Tenet of Protestants, which *Bellarmino* undertakes to confute, is this, *Ut sine populi consensu & suffragio, nemo legitime electus aut vocatus ad episcopatum habeatur*." And then he adds, "Tho' our Writers disclaim many Things which he imputes to them, yet (says he) I find not this disclaimed by any of them that write against him:" And then he tells how it is plainly maintained by those eminent Protestant Divines, *Luther, Calvin, Beza, Musculus, Zanchy, Junius, Cartwright*, and many others whom there he cites. So also the learned Professor *Jamieson* affirms to the same Purpose, namely, that our Protestant Writers contended against the *Papists* for this Principle of the People's Right to elect their Pastors, *from the Time of their being first sent forth to fight the Battles of the Lamb against the Dragon*. The *Jesuits* at *Rheims*, commenting on *Acts* 14. 23, do charge it upon the Protestants, whom there they call *Hereticks*, that they teach *all Priests are to be chosen by the people*. Cardinal *Bellarmino* says, "All Catholics teach with great Consent, that the Right of ordaining and calling Pastors pertaineth in no Way to the People:" We do not plead *Ordination*, but only that Election does belong unto them. Protestants teach, that Consent is the very least that belongs unto Christian Congregations.

Now, the Principle and Practice that opposeth the People's Right in this Business being evidently *Popish*, I see not but it may be a Scruple for Ministers to concur in any violent Settlement. And it may increase their Scruple, that in the *National Covenant* the Land was expressly sworn against *all Kind of Popery in general and particular Heads*; and also sworn against all the erroneous Decrees made at *Trent*, of which Number their Decrees against the People's Right to elect their Pastors was one; for in the 7th Canon of their *Sacrament of Orders*, that Council of *Trent* anathematiz-

\* Election of Pastors, &c.

matizeth, or gives to the Devil, all that say Ordinations without, the Call or Consent of the People, are void. Yet, for as corrupt as that Council was, some in it owned it was anciently the Custom for the People to have the Choice of their Pastors; and some argued for having it so still: Upon which *Diego Lainer*, General of the *Jesuites*, stood up, and said, That was a Motion from the Devil; for, if the Church had not found it inconvenient, she had never altered it. Such as oppose the People's Right here, as in my Opinion they go into the Popish Camp in this Particular, so upon the Matter they say, the Popish Writers have understood the Scriptures much better than our Protestant Divines, who, in all Times since the Reformation, have pleaded their Right from the sacred Oracles.

*Tim.* Whether have all *Romanists* always been, and are, against the People's Right in this particular Head? and whether are all Protestants for it?

*Iren.* I own the Question comes in pertinently enough here, but you must have me excused at this Time; and, if spared, you may expect an Answer to these at another Season, if required. But, as I cannot tarry at this Time, so I cannot promise to meet with you till next Week; but, if you shall take the Trouble of calling next *Monday's* Morning, I'll wait upon you.

*Tim.* Be it at Eight in the Morning that Day.—  
Farewell.



## DIALOGUE III.

T I M O T H E U S.

I Hope you are well since your Journey ?

I R E N E U S.

I'm in ordinary Health.

*Tim.* Now, let me know what are your other Arguments, which you said are of a more general Nature, obliging all, whether they be Presbyterians in the Church of Scotland, or People of any other Communion.

*Iren.* If this be your Desire, then my 1<sup>st</sup> Argument is, That with all Protestant Divines we affirm, that no more Obedience is due to the highest of Church Judicatures, than is due to the supreme Civil Magistrate, and that is only when his Commands are lawful, as says our *Confession of Faith*; \* “ It is the Duty of People to pray  
“ for Magistrates, to honour their Persons, to pay them  
“ Tribute and other Dues; to obey their lawful Com-  
“ mands, and to be subject to their Authority for Con-  
“ science sake.” There you see, 'tis only to their law-  
ful Commands that we owe Obedience. So the Church of France in their *Confession of Faith*, speaking of Civil Magistrates, they say, “ We affirm, That Obedience  
“ must be yielded to their Laws and Statutes, Tribute  
“ must be paid them, Taxes and all other Duties; and  
“ that we must bear the Yoke of Subjection with a free  
“ and willing Mind, altho' the Magistrates be Infidels; so  
“ that the sovereign Government of God be preserv'd entire; That last Sentence is a plain Limitation of Obedience, *Sic volo sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*, is Doctrine which will never go down with sound Protestants, whether concerning supreme Governors in Church or State.

*Tim.* Proceed to another Argument.

*Iren.*

*Iren.* A 2d Argument is, As it is the common and universally received Doctrine of all Protestants, That the highest of all Church Judicatures are subject to Error, and may err through Ignorance, knowing but in Part; yet as our Lord says, *If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch.* Be our Leaders who will, their Commands or their Example will never excuse us; *Isa. ix. 15.* shows this clearly, where the God of Truth says, *For the Leaders of this People cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed,* or swallowed up: Were we obliged to obey their unlawful Commands, we should perish, without our own Fault, with those *blind Leaders of the Blind.* And as Church Judicatures may err through Ignorance, so sometimes they may err through Negligence, and sometimes they may err through Pravity, as to support a Party-Interest, and the like. Sometimes the Priests have erred, *departing out of the Way, causing many to stumble;* therefore we are to *prove al Things,* studying to prove and know what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God, more than what is the Will of any Judicature upon Earth.

*Tim.* Go to another Argument.

*Iren.* A 3d Argument is, That if the Command of any Worm Creature interfere with the Commands of the adorable, sovereign and supreme Governor of the World, then 'tis better, infinitely better to obey God than Man, as *Acts iv. 19.* where the Apostle said to the Jewish Sanhedrim, *Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* There the Apostles appeal to one of the common acknowledged Maxims in the Law of Nature, That if Men's Commands and God's interfere, God's Commands must take place, come of all human Laws what will. Surely, as says the Author of *Jus populi vindicatum* (said to have been the late Lord Advocate Sir James Stewart) "No Law of Man can warrant Iniquity; no Act or Constitution of any under Heaven can rescind or invalidate the Mandates of the King of Kings, or exempt People from Obedience thereunto." And, as if one accused  
of

of committing Treason against the King or supreme Magistrate, should own he had done what is laid to his Charge, but pleads, what he did, tho' he knew it to be Treason, and against the Law, yet he had Authority, or the Command of one of the King's Officers, for doing of it: I suppose that would be a poor Plea, or no Plea, for his Vindication; and so I think the Case is here.

But I proceed to a 4<sup>th</sup> Argument: To censure any for not obeying the Commands of the highest Powers when unjust, is to condemn and censure them for refusing to sin against God; surely this is to condemn and censure them for that, for which they are to be applauded and highly commended: For it is a God-provoking Iniquity to obey the highest of Mortals in doing Evil. God was highly displeased with Ephraim, or the Ten Tribes, because *they willingly walked after the Commandment, Hos. v. 11.* The Commandment was the Commandment of King Jeroboam, with his Princes and corrupt Priests, as to me is evident from the Context. Their Command was, That they should stay and worship before the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, without putting themselves to the Trouble of going up to worship at the *Temple in Jerusalem*. They were a *Snare upon Mizpah*, and a *Net set upon Mount Tabor*: Places that were in the Way to *Jerusalem*, where they watched or caused watch all such as they found going up to *Jerusalem* to worship, commanding them to go back. It seems many of the Ten Tribes, yea even the generality, complied with the Commandment of their Superiors; and therefore God suffered them to be oppressed, and he brake them in Judgment, denouncing many heavy Judgments against them, as we see in sundry Places of that Chapter. Tho' the Divine Majesty will not fail to reward such as are obedient to the lawful Commands, whether of *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical* Rulers, yet Wo will be unto us, if we be such Loyal Subjects, or so obedient to the Commands of any, when contrary the Will of the Supreme Sovereign Ruler, the King of Kings. Mr. George Hutchison, sometime  
a worthy



a worthy Minister in *Edinburgh*, and one who knew well the Principles of this and other reformed Churches, commenting on this Verse, he says; "No Command of Men, even of Rulers, will excuse Sin, especially in Matters of Religion; but Obedience to what they Command may oftentimes be the Cause of God's Controversy against a People; for it is a Challenge against *Ephraim*, because he walked after the Commandment, and gave Obedience to it." Surely Compliance with the Injunctions of Men, which thwart with the Divine Precepts, or the Royal Law of Heaven, are hainous Provocations. The fore-mentioned *Hales* on *Schism*, when speaking of the great Combustion which befel the Church, about the Time of observing *Easter*, says; "It happened thro' the Ignorance of their Guides, and that through the just Judgment of God, because thro' Sloth and blind Obedience Men examined not the Things which they were taught, but like Beasts of Burden patiently couched down, and indifferently underwent whatsoever their Superiors laid upon them."

*Tim.* Surely to go with a Multitude to do Evil is highly provoking, tho' of the highest, and tho' they should enjoin and Threaten, if we would not do Evil.

*Iren.* But I adduce a 5th Argument, namely, If our Superiors of the highest Church Judicature should enjoin any Thing we judge to be repugnant to the Word of God; then in such a Case, instead of Obedience, we are commanded modestly and meekly to testify against them; for the Lord, by the Prophet *Hosea* \*, says to the Godly in *Israel*, *Plead with your Mother, plead, By their Mother in that Place their Mother Church of Israel* is meant: The doubling the Exhortation may import this is a very necessary and momentuous duty. The word there rendred *plead* is variouly translated: Some render it *judge* her, some *contend* with her, some *expostulate* with her, and some, as in our Translation, *plead* with her. Even private Christians may humbly tell a Church wherein she is culpable. Hence the Apostle exhorts

the

*the Colossians, to say to Archippus, their Minister, Take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it †. This is to be done, not in Pride or Self-conceit, but from Respect with Reverence; Re-buke not an Elder, but intreat him as a Father. People are to beware of carrying themselves contemptuously or irreverently towards their Pastors; they are to know those that are over them in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Work's sake. However, as we would evidence Love to our Mother, and Zeal for our heavenly Father, we are to do our utmost in our Station to have what may be amiss in her amended; and if she backslide, to have her reduced to her former Purity. If we may plead or expostulate with a Church, if she hath done amiss, surely it would be a hairous Provocation, if instead of this we should tamely obey her sinful Commands, for which she is to be pleaded with: Yea, and if we are to plead with her, surely her Members in Church Judicatures may humbly dissent from her unjust Sentences, entring them in the Records for their own Exoneration.*

*Tim.* If Ministers do the Work of the Lord negligently, People I think may modestly put them in mind of their Work and Duty.

*Iren.* Yes; But I go on to a 6th Argument against yielding Obedience, blind Obedience. I mean, to Superiors; and the Argument is this, That our Lord Jesus Christ hath expressly discharged us from calling any Man our Father on Earth, for one is our Father which is in Heaven, *Matth. xxiii. 9, 10.* And there also, our Lord cautions all his Disciples against being called Masters, because one is their Master, even Christ. Judicious *Diodati*, commenting upon these Words, says, "This teacheth Believers in general not to yield that absolute Reverence nor Power over their Consciences to any living Man, which belongeth unto God only, as ignorant People used to do unto the Pharisees." In the immediately preceeding Verse, our Lord had cautioned his Disciples against being called Rabbi, because one was their Master even Christ, and all they were Brethren,

that

† Col. 4. 17,

that is, says the fore-mentioned Commentator, "do not attribute to yourselves the Authority of absolute Masters of my Church." 'Tis a Sin in any, *jurare in verba magistri*: The *ipse dixit* of no Man is sufficient for our Belief: We are not to be *Pythagorean* Disciples: No Man upon Earth but is fallible, being ready to be deceived, or to deceive, no Man's Word is sufficient for a Law: *Call no Man your Father*, that is, says *Caryl*, "give no Man Power over your Judgments, or Consciences." The Children of God must see, that all they do be agreeable to the Will of their heavenly Father: As we are daily to pray to our Father who is in Heaven, so our Prayer must be, that his Will may be done on Earth as in Heaven, come of the Will of Worm-Men what will. It was a Praise-worthy *Apothegme*, a commendable Resolution, in *James I. of England*, and *VI. of Scotland*, when, in his *Confess. of Faith*, Art. 3, which treats of the Authority of the *Fathers*, he said, "I will follow *St. Augustine's* Rule in judging of their Opinions, as I find them agree with the Scriptures: what I find agreeable thereto, I will gladly embrace; what is otherwise, I will (with their Reverence) reject." We are to follow no Man in Belief nor Practice, but as the Word of God requireth. Again, we are expressly forbidden to be *the Servants of Men* \*; and surely, to obey the Injunctions of Men, when we cannot see them to be agreeable to the Will of our adorable Lord and Master, is to make them our Masters, and to be the Servants of Men with a Witness: *Know ye not* (says the Apostle) *that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness?* †

But I proceed to a 7th Argument, which is, That it is the Command of the Most High, that we *worship the Lord our God, and him only are we to serve*, Mat. 4. 10. In my Opinion, to yield blind Obedience to any Men or Angels, is to *worship the Creature more*

H

than

\* 1 Cor. 7. 23.

† Rom. 6. 16.



than the Creator, the yielding such Obedience being a Sort of worshipping them whom we obey. Hence *Claud*, in his *Defence of the Reformation*, Page 103, says, "An absolute Obedience, and an entire Resignation of one's self to the Conduct of another, as to those Matters that regard the Faith and the Conscience, is a Duty that we can render lawfully to none but God.—A Man cannot submit his Understanding and Heart to the Word of any one, so as to believe blindly that which he says, without giving him a Kind of Adoration; for there can be no greater Homage than that of a blind Submission. It is then an Act that can belong to none but God immediately, that we ought not to transfer to the Church, if we would not adore the Church; and to which by Consequence a Church can never pretend, without usurping the just Rights of God." The Bishop of *Hereford*, in his *Legacy to his Diocese*, printed against Popery 1679, speaks much to the same Purpose P. 37 and 78, calling it Idolatry to believe any Assembly of Men or Church, without we were infallibly assured of their being guided by the Holy Ghost. "Absolute Obedience is (as the learned Mr. *Lawder* says) a Kind of Adoration due unto God only, and that because we are not capable to give a higher Kind of Obedience unto God: And (*adds he*) to give the Bishops absolute Obedience, is to give them the highest Kind of Obedience, and to honour them as much as God Almighty, and to make them equal to him in that Respect;" affirming, "That if Presbyters and People yield absolute Obedience to them, they do hereby become guilty of manifest Idolatry \*".

*Tim.* Our Lord having said, *One is your Father which is in Heaven*, says as much to me as if he had said, he alone, who is the God of Heaven, is to be obeyed with blind Obedience.

*Iren.* I proceed to an 8th Argument against blind Obedience to any of the Children of Men; and it is this,

\* *Cypr. Bp.* p. 131.

this, For any to yield such Obedience to the highest of Church Judicatures, or Potentates, would be a plain condemning of all the Martyrs of Christ, as a Company of meer empty Fools, charging them as Persons dying by their own Folly, when they might have complied with the Commands of their Superiors in Church or State, and so have escaped Suffering; charging *Shadrach, Meshach* and *Abednego*, as brain-sick Fellows, who would run the Risk of being burnt to Ashes, when they might have saved themselves from that Danger, and all Sufferings, by a Bow, at the great King *Nebuchadnezzar's* Command, before his golden Image, when they might kept their Hearts to their own God: Or such a Practice would made them *wiser than Daniel*, who was so weak as not to forbear to pray publickly *with his Windows open toward Jerusalem* for a few Days, though he should be torn to a thousand Pieces by cruel roring Lions.

Again, in the 9th Place, For Judicatures to require, and Ministers, and others, to yield blind Obedience to the Commands of the highest, whether in Church or State, is a plain Condemnation of the Wisdom of God; and, to speak with holy Reverence, a charging him, who is *God only wise*, as being an inconsiderate, foolish, cruel Lord or Master, for telling his Disciples and Servants, if they would evidence themselves to be his Disciples, they behoved to part with their Blood, and lay down their Life for him and his Truths; when complying with the Command of Superiors in Church or State, wherever their Lot should be cast, would be commendable Wisdom and Prudence to save them from all their Sufferings; and if there be any Sin in the Command let their Superiors answer for it. We are to chuse the greatest of Sufferings rather than be guilty of the least of Sins. The Law of Christ requires, that we *resist unto Blood, striving against Sin*, the very least of Sins: *Be thou faithful unto Death*, says our Lord, *and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, *Rev. 2. 10.* He requires us to hate our own Life for him, *Luke 14. 26, 27.* It was the high Commendation

da ion of those Worthies, who *overcame through the Blood of the Lamb, that they loved not their Lives unto the Death, Rev. 12. 11.*

*Tim.* I think that Inference is native. If the Doctrine of blind Obedience is lawful, surely the Doctrine of passive Obedience, or of resisting unto Death and Blood, is an unaccountable Doctrine. Be pleased to proceed.

*Iren.* My 10th Argument in favours of *private* Judgment, and against yielding blind Obedience to Superiors in Ecclesiastical Judicatures, is, That it is a Doctrine which cannot be swallowed by any that are of tender Conscience, being unscriptural, having no Foundation in the Word of God. It hath been said, *Ut pudet legisperito absque lege, sic & theologo absque scriptura loqui.* Let such as plead for this Obedience adduce but one Text of Scripture, which can prove such Obedience to be due, and chearful Obedience will be yielded: But till this be shown, their Affirmations can never have sufficient Light in them to convince. And could Scripture Testimony been adduced to prove this, 'tis probable the learned Dr. *Isaac Barrow* had not neglected it; for 'tis observable, that after he hath spent three long Sermons and a half in arguing for Obedience to spiritual Guides and Governors, from these Words, *Obeys them that have the Rule over you \**; arguing so as one might be tempted to think he was for universal unlimited absolute Obedience to them; yet when he is past the Middle of his 4th Sermon on that Subject, he says, "I do not hereby mean to assert, that we are obliged  
" indifferently, with an implicate Faith or blind Obedi-  
" ence, to believe all that our Teachers say, or to pra-  
" ctise all that they bid us, for they are Men, and there-  
" fore subject to Error and Sin.----- We are to consider  
" and look about us, using our Reason, Judgment and  
" Discretion so far as we are capable; we cannot in such  
" a Case be blamed for too much Circumspection and  
" Caution.----- If we are misled by the ill Guidance  
" of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and  
" die in our Iniquity.----- We shall perish without  
" Blame,

\* Heb. 13. 17.



“ Blame, if we were bound as a blind and brutish Herd  
 “ to follow others.---- Our Lord himself and his Apostles  
 “ did not upon other Terms, than of rational Conside-  
 “ ration and Discussion, exact Credit and Obedience to  
 “ their Words, and did not insist barely upon their  
 “ Authority, &c.” Surely nothing below Scripture-  
 Authority is sufficient to found such a Privilege as this,  
 of Obedience to their Commands, whether we can see  
 them to be agreeable to the Will of our sovereign Lord  
 or not ; till once they shew this, their Pretences to it  
 are vain. When earthly Sovereigns, or when King and  
 Parliament, make Laws which they intend should be  
 obeyed, they print or make publick Proclamation of  
 them, and record them with their other Acts in the pub-  
 lick Register, to be seen of all ; and if this be not done,  
 no Person is punished for Non-obedience to them ; and  
 no more would it be here : Hence we are to consult *the*  
*Law and Testimony.* *Tertullian* a Father in the 3d Cen-  
 tury, in his Writing against *Hermogenes*, says, Let  
*Hermogenes* make it appear that it is written ; or if it  
 be not written in Scripture, let him be afraid of that Wo  
 against those who add or take away from it. If any  
 Judicature of Christ shall pretend a Power or Privilege,  
 for which they can shew no Authority from the alone  
 Head of the Church, they are guilty before the Lord,  
 and their Pretences are to be rejected. The Pope of  
*Rome* pretends to be Head of the Church, also to be the  
 supreme Judge of Controversies, and to be infallible in  
 his Determinations. All Protestants reject these, be-  
 cause he can shew no sufficient Scripture-Authority for  
 them. Others set up for Diocesan Bishops, and for their  
 having a Negative over Presbyters, and the sole Power  
 of Ordination ; we again reject these for the same Rea-  
 son : And as much is the Principle of supreme Judica-  
 tures, having Authority to bind their Inferiors, to blind  
 Obedience, to be rejected, till they shew Christ's Autho-  
 rity in his Word for it. The Word of Christ is the  
*Cynosura*, the only sure Rule, by which we are to steer  
 our Course in sailing thro' the Ocean of this World.

Here

Here indeed, as noticed above, some have cited, *Matth. xviii. 17. If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen Man and a Publican.* This, as the learn'd Poole, in his *Criticks* says, is as if a Parent, commending his Children to a Pedagogue, should threaten if they did not obey him, viz. enjoining that which was right; but if he enjoined any Thing which was base or vile, his Authority was to be contemned; *Laudatur qui auctoritatem ejus aspernatur.* People, according to him, are so far from deserving Censure or Condemnation, that they deserve Commendation who despise the Injunctions of Superiors, when they enjoin what is base or sinful. Some have also cited, *Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you.* But our Obedience to them, is only such Obedience as Subjects owe their Sovereign, as Children owe their Parents, and as Servants owe their Master, which is only *in the Lord*, or when they are agreeable to the Command of Christ, the Head of the Church and supreme Lawgiver, as say all sound Commentators; *Parendum eis secundum Deum*, says Junius. Some have also argued from *Matth. xxiii. 2, 3. The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* But that Scripture binds not to unlimited Obedience: Our Lord himself accuseth those Ecclesiastical Rulers, of having made *the Law of God void by their Traditions*; and cautions his Disciples, *To take heed and beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees*, *Matth. xvi. 6.* that is, to beware of hearkning to their corrupt Doctrines, or of yielding Obedience to any of their unlawful Injunctions. The King commands us to obey his Officers; but if the highest of them shall enjoin us to do what is manifestly to the Sovereign's Dishonour, and contrary to that Homage we owe unto him, it would be displeasing to obey them: All such Exhortations are to be understood with the Restriction, *If agreeable to the Will of God*, or to his holy Word.

There is a 4th Scripture, which I see some have argued from, which is *2 Pet. i. 20.* where the Apostle says, *Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of the Scrip-  
ture*

ture is of any private Interpretation. From this they affirm the Scriptures bear Witness of themselves, that they are not of any private Interpretation: And therefore private Judgment is not the Rule or Guide by which they are explained \*. The Papists who are zealous against private Judgment, but for blind Obedience and *implicite Faith*, adduce this as a Text to prove that the People are not to judge of the Meaning of the Scriptures, because, as say the *Jesuites of Rheimes*, commenting on that Text, "The Scriptures cannot be rightly expounded of every private Spirit or Fancy of the vulgar Reader; but by the same Spirit where with they were written, which is resident in the Church." To which as *Cartwright* answers, "It is true, that the Scriptures cannot be expounded of every private Spirit, nor which is more of any private Spirit, nor yet of all private Spirits together; But only of those which are inspired of God, namely the *Prophets* and *Apostles* which are here opposed unto private Interpretation: and therefore it is evident, that the Exposition of the Scripture ought not to be fetched from Ecclesiastical, either Fathers or Councils, which speak not by Inspiration, but from the Scriptures themselves.' Surely, Scripture is the best Interpreter of Scripture, and what is more dark in one Place is more clearly revealed in another. Or the Meaning of that Scripture may be, That no Scripture, or Scripture Prophecy, is the private Interpretation or Explication of the Penmen of the Scriptures, nor of their own Minds; but it is the Interpretation or Revelation, the Explication or Declaration of the Mind and Will of God. And the Context shows this to be the Meaning, the next Words being, *For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* The false Prophets spake a Vision of their own Hearts, Jer. 23. 16. but the true Prophets spake the Word of the Lord that came to them. And though the

\* Author of the Essay against private Judgment, p. 46.



the Scriptures be not of a private Original, or the private Sentiments of Men, but the Mind and Will of God; yet it is the Duty of all, not only to read them, but to search into the Meaning of them, *comparing spiritual Things with spiritual*, as 1 Cor. 2. 13. Sundry other Explications are given of this Text, which here I shall not insist upon.

*Tim.* The Divine Oracles are the Rule of all Obedience. If you have any other Arguments let me hear them.

*Iren.* In the 11th Place, Our Sovereign Lord forbids his Servants to exercise Lordship over the Souls of any\*: The Apostle *Paul* says, *not that we have Dominion over your Faith* †, and the Apostle *Peter* cautions all Pastors against begin Lords over God's Heritage ‡. These Expressions show plainly, that his Servants, whether by themselves, or when assembled in Church Judicatures, should cautiously guard against all Lordship or Dominion over others, whether as to their Faith or Practice, so as to believe what they teach with implicate Faith; or to obey them with blind Obedience, without examining all they say or command by the Touchstone of the Lord's infallible Word: *Romanists* and sundry of *Episcopal* Principles, to enervate or elude the Force of that Scripture where the Lord hath forbidden his Disciples to exercise this Dominion, they say, he forbids not the Dominion itself, but only the Manner of this Dominion, or he only forbids the affecting of such Dominion, or the exercising it tyrannically, or ruling with Violence: But it is clear and evident, Christ, when he says, *the Kings of the Gentiles exercise Dominion or Lordship*, he adds, *It shall not be so with you*. It is the Dominion, Lordship or Sovereignty itself, and not the Manner of it which he forbids; for Christ says not, the Kings or Princes of the Gentiles affect Dominion, but they do exercise Dominion: And it is observable, that the Contest among the Disciples spoken of in the Context, was not

\* Matth. 20. 25. Luke 22. 25, 26.

† 2 Cor. 1. 24. ‡ 1 Peter 5. 2, 3.

Not about the Violence or Mildness and Gentleness of Dominion, but about the Dominion itself: As the Apostle *Peter* says, Pastors are to feed the Flock of God, not as being Lords over the Flock of Christ, for they have no Authority less or more of their own to command, but are to act in all Things according to the Laws of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A 12th Argument is this, That every private Christian is allowed by the Sovereign Lord of the whole Creation, to try and examine what Ministers teach or Judicatures command; and not only allowed, but expressly commanded in his Word, to try, examine and prove all that is said by any of the Sons of Men or Angels in Heaven; we are not only allowed I say, but commanded expressly to do this, as *1 Thess.* 5. 21. *Prove all Things, hold fast that which is good;* so *1 John* 4. 1. *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God.* The Apostle prays that the believing *Philippians* might have an abundant Measure of all Knowledge and Judgment, that they might try Things that differ, that so they might be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ\*: And in his writing to the *Galatians* † says, *If we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach to you another Gospel than we have preached to you, let him be accursed.* There once and again the Apostle repeats the Expressions, were the highest Angel, Cherubim or Seraphim in Heaven to preach unto us, we are or would be obliged to examine their Doctrines or Commands by the Rule of God's Word, and if their Doctrines and Commands be unsound, pronounce an *Anathema* against them; and surely as much if not much more are we to guard against blind Obedience to the highest of Judicatures upon Earth. Now, if private Christians, then also beyond peradventure ruling Elders and Ministers are allowed, yea commanded to try all Things.

I

This

\* Philip. 1. 9, 10.

† Gal. 1. 9, 10.

This hath been the Doctrine of the Church of Christ in the best of former Times ; hence the learned Bishop *Davenant* says †, “ All our Divines affirm, that every “ Christian who hath any Regard of his Soul ought to “ reduce the Decrees of Faith to the Rule of Faith, and “ so far to admit them as they understand they agree “ with that Rule,” viz. the Scripture ; so that we owe Obedience to our Church Rulers, only in so far as we judge their Injunctions to agree with the unerring Rule of God’s Word. And as we are to examine and try, so a Man’s own private Reason and Judgment is that Balance in which he must weigh his Actions ; the last Dictate of the Understanding is the most natural Guide of the Will, be the Dictates thereof true or false. Conscience is God’s Deputy in the Soul, trying all by the Touchstone of the Word.

Further in the 13<sup>th</sup> Place, That the Doctrine of *blind Obedience* to Commands of the highest Church Judicature enjoining what is unlawful, is unsound, to me is evident from the many gross Absurdities which follow upon it. As it follows, the *Jews* were obliged to join in crucifying the Lord of Glory, tho’ they had known and believed he was the true *Messias* ; for the High Priests and other Members of the *Jewish Sanhedrim* had declared for this, that he ought to die, and stirred up the People to cry, *Crucify him, crucify him* : Then also it follows, *Athanasius* deserved to been called *Sathanasius*, and to have been condemned for his zealous appearing for the supreme Deity of the Son of God, asserting he was *ὁμοούσιος* and not barely *ὁμοιόσιος*, and from that it follows all the World should then been *Arians*, because then Church Judicatures were of that dreadful Principle ; then the Council of *Ariminum*, and sundry of the *Councils* of *Sirmium* declared for *Arianism* : And it would follow, that after the 2<sup>d</sup> Council of *Nice* and sundry other *Councils*, it was the Duty of People to worship God by Images ; because such Synods and Councils declared for that. According to this Doctrine, had our last General Assembly done as did the General Assembly

† De jud. & norma fidei.



at *Dundee* 1598, which voted and declared for the Kirk's having vote in Parliament; or had they done as did the Assembly 1610 at *Glasgow*, which declared for *Diocesan Bishops* upon the Matter, and overturned *Presbyterian* Government; or had they done as did the Assembly at *Perth* 1618, voting for those five Articles which are commonly termed the *Articles of Perth*; according to this Doctrine, we would been obliged to have gone in with and yielded Obedience to them, which is most absurd to affirm; or had our General Assembly about 1637, gone in to approve of that corrupt *Liturgy* sent down by the King, according to this Doctrine, all ought, without asking Questions, or making the least Trial, to have gone in with it, for the Sake of Peace in Church and State,

This Doctrine will justify *Romanists* in their Obedience to all the Decrees of the *Council of Trent*, however wicked; and many such Absurdities might be particularized: Was this Doctrine true, then instead of being *stedfast in the Faith*, we must be *tossed to and fro*, and *carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, and our Faith and Walk To-morrow must be directly *Antipodes* to what it is To-day; the Decisions of Church Judicatures being as opposite sometimes as is *Light to Darknes*: And many are the other prodigious Absurdities which inevitably follow from that Assertion.

I know some are ready to say, To obey a General Assembly for the Peace and Good of the Church in settling a Minister, tho' against the Will of a Congregation, is but a small Fault, if any at all. But it would be minded, that *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, as says the Apostle, and a damnable Sin; *he that eateth and doubteth is damned if he eat*, Rom 14. 23, *The Wages of Sin*, even of the least Sin is *Death*, and the *second Death*; he that should keep the whole Law, if he offend but in one Point willingly and deliberately he is guilty of all, contemning the Authority of the sovereign Law-giver of Heaven and Earth; as a little Thief will let in a greater, so the very least Sin, if allowed, will make way for a greater: *Principiis obsta* is a good Rule: *Ba-*

*bylon's little Ones* are to be *dash'd* in Pieces against the Wall: Little Sins bring great Wrath, being against the great God who commands us to shun the very Appearance of Evil: The *motus primo primi* are to be resisted, we are to hate *the Thoughts of Vanity and Wickedness which are Sin*: Every Thought of the Soul is to be brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ. They say of *Adrian* that he was killed by a Gnat: Some have been eaten up by small Vermine: But that is a little Sin cannot be granted. Many other Absurdities might here been instanced, but longer at present I cannot tarry.

*Tim.* I suppose now you have finished all your Arguments in favour of *private Judgment*, and against the Doctrine of *blind Obedience* to the Commands of the highest.

*Iren.* You are mistaken, I have sundry other Arguments which to me are very considerable; but the Day being far spent, I cannot at this Time insist upon them.

*Tim.* Before parting, I desire to know when I shall wait upon you for another Conference.

*Iren.* I cannot promise a Day for two Weeks hence, but if you please to call *Monday* coming fifteen Days, as early as you think meet, I am resolved to await you.

*Tim.* So be it. Farewell.

DIALOGUE

## DIALOGUE IV.

IRENEUS.

What Sort of a Morning is it ?

TIMOTHEUS.

A very pleasant Morning ; But let us go on to our Business ; I mean to have an Account of your other Arguments in favours of *Private Judgment*, and against the yielding of *blind Obedience* to the highest of Church Judicatures, if their Commands be such as, upon serious impartial Trial, we cannot see them to be lawful and consonant to the Commands of the most High.

*Iren.* I mind at our last Parting, I told you, besides the 13 Arguments formerly adduced, I had sundry others, which to me were also of Weight in the present Case, and now I'm ready to produce them.

*Tim.* Then be pleased to narrate these.

*Iren.* My 14th Argument is, That for any to deny *Private Judgment* unto Men, requiring blind Obedience from them, is directly contrary to Christ our Sovereign Lord his express Command, who calls all his Subjects, all his People, to judge for themselves concerning what is right or wrong, as *Luke xii. 57* ; where he says to the People ; *Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right.* The Jews believed their Rabbies were to be credited, tho' they should affirm the Left-hand was the Right, and the Right-hand the Left ; and those Rabbies maintained, their Decrees were no less binding upon the Conscience for Obedience than the Precepts of the written Law. Our Lord, in the 1st Verse of that Chapter, said to his Disciples, *Beware ye of the Leaven, or corrupt Doctrine, of the Pharisees* ; and here he may have a special Eye to their Doctrine, of which he would have the People to judge what was right, and what might be wrong in it : Guarding against

im-



implicit Faith; we are to judge for ourselves, without any Church or Assembly judging for us. Every Man's own Conscience is to judge for him; Rational Creatures are to exercise their Reason in judging what is enjoined, whether agreeable to the Word and Will of God, which is the supreme infallible Judge of Right and Wrong in Things relating to the Conscience: And, as the learned and judicious *Poole*, having cited that Text †, says, "Christ no where commands his Hearers blindly to submit to the Decrees of the present Judge, their Church, the High Priest and Council; but calls upon them to judge for themselves, to beware of the Leaven, *i. e.* the false Doctrine of their Rulers; and (which is more) refers his own Doctrine to their searching, *John* v. 39. *Search the Scriptures.*" If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his, says the Apostle \*. By the Spirit one is made spiritual, and so is a fit Judge of such Affairs, *2 Cor.* ii. 15. *He that is spiritual judgeth all Things.* And as Christ, so his Apostles after his Example, enjoin and require the same, namely, that People judge for themselves, as *1 Cor.* x. 15. *I speak as to wise Men, judge ye what I say.* And in the 11th Chap. 13. he says, *Judge in yourselves, is it comely, &c.*

*Tim.* None can have the Impudence to deny, that Christ his *ipse dixit* is Proof enough; his bare Command carries uncontrollable Authority in it. Go on to another Argument.

*Iren.* In the 15th Place, As this Doctrine of blind Obedience is contrary to Christ, our Sovereign Lord, his express Command; so also it is contrary to the commendable approved Example of his Disciples, yea, to the Example of our Lord himself, which is evident from *Matth.* xv. and *Mark* vii. at the Beginning of those Chapters; where we read of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* their coming to Christ, and asking why his Disciples did not obey the Traditions or Canons of their Elders, that I take to be the Commands of their Rulers or

† Appendix to the Nullity of Romish Faith, p. 40.

\* Rom. viii. 9.

or superior Judicature : The Thing complained of and quarrelled was, That the Disciples of our Lord went to Meat with unwashen Hands ; they, as *Henry* commenting upon the Place says, supposed *that he allowed them in it, as no doubt* (adds he) *he did by his own Example.* The Scribes and Pharisees were top Men in the *Jewish* Church ; 'tis said they were of *Jerusalem*, the Metropolis and chief City in the Land of *Canaan*, to which the Tribes went up, and where were set the Thrones of Judgment. They quarrelled that his Disciples had transgressed, in that they had not obeyed the Commands of the Elders, or the Canons of their Superiors, the Command of their great Rabbies, the Superiors of their Church. And had there been any Fault in not obeying that Command, of washing always before Meat, our Lord had never stood up in their Vindication ; yea, it is not to be doubted but he countenanced them in this by his own Example : Or tho' they could not have charged him, as having encouraged them thereby, yet his vindicating them in what they did in that Affair, was as much as if they could have proven he had done so. The *Jews*, particularly the Scribes and Pharisees, they placed much Religion in this of washing their Hands before they did eat, and in washing of *Cups, Pots, brazed Vessels* and *Tables*, enjoining this under Penalties ; but our Lord and his Disciples would not give the least Countenance to their imposing Humour, by showing any Regard to their Injunctions : They reckoned it Duty to give their Testimony against their Conduct in that Affair, by walking in direct Opposition to their Traditions.

*Tim.* But whether have not Superiors Authority to command, and oblige their Inferiors to obey them in all Things which are indifferent in themselves, as that of washing their Hands before Meat, and the like ?

*Iren.* I humbly think they have not : For in whatever the King of Kings hath left his Subjects at Liberty with respect to his Worship, though it be purely indifferent in itself, yet no Church Judicature upon Earth, in my Opinion, can make it necessary, so as to bind

the Conscience; especially if those indifferent Things be offensive, in their Use and Practice, to them that are weak. At the Passover the Lord left the *Jews* at Liberty to take the Paschal Lamb either from the Sheep, or from the Goats, *Exod.* xii. 5. *Lev.* i. 16. The Peace-Offering might either be a Male or Female, *Lev.* iii. 1, 6. The burnt Sacrifice might either be Turtle-Doves or young Pigeons, *Lev.* i. 14. Now, it may be left to the Judgment of all the impartial thinking World, whether *Moses*, *Aaron*, and the whole Tribe of *Levi*, and all the Rulers in *Israel* joining with them, had Power to restrict the *Jews* to any of these Things in which the Lord had left his People at Liberty; or, should they have done so, I dare say, no *Jew* of a tender Conscience durst have obeyed them. All are to stand fast in that Liberty wherewith *Christ* hath made them free, *Gal.* v. 1.

*Tim.* I dare not contradict what you have said. But go on.

*Iren.* As formerly I proved, That blindly to obey the Commands of the highest of Church Judicatures is an *Anti-Presbyterian* Principle; so, for a 16th Argument, I affirm it is an *Anti-Reformation* Principle. I call it *Anti-Reformation*; because, 1. It is a Principle against which all our Reformers gave plain and open Testimony. *Neal*, in his *History of the Puritans*, says \*, "The Reformers, in 1554, printed a Summary of their Faith, for which they were ready to offer up their Lives to the Halter, or the Fire, as God should appoint:" In which Summary they declared, "They believed the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and the Judge of all Controversies in Matters of Religion; and that the Church is to be obeyed as long as she followed this Word." Those Expressions show the Reformers were against yielding Obedience in the least to the Commands of any Church, unless in the Judgment of Discretion the Command was agreeable to the Word of God: They asserted, That nothing is to be admitted in Religion, but what is warranted by the Divine



Divine Law and Testimony; affirming, that this their Assertion was manifest, by the express Testimony of the Fathers. And as Dr. Owen says †, "It was another Principle of the Reformation, That Christian People were not tied up to blind Obedience unto Church Guides, but were not only at Liberty, but also obliged, to judge for themselves, as unto all Things that they were to believe and practise in Religion and the Worship of God." They maintained and contended for this as a Principle of the Reformation, That a People, in all that concerns Religion, were to be Judges for themselves; and many of them may be said to have parted with their Hearts Blood in Defence of this Truth.

2. This also might be called an *Anti-Reformation Principle*, as the Generality of Churchmen, who ever espoused the opposite Principle of *blind Obedience*, have been opposite to Reformation. Witness the Opposition they made to the *Waldenses*, the *Albigenses*, to *Huss*, to *Hierome of Prague*, to *Luther* and *Calvin*, to *Wickliff*, to *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, *Hooper*, to *Hamilton*, *Wisheart*, *Knox*, and others in our own Land; witness also the Opposition made to Reformation at the *Hampton Court Conference*, where we read of some of the Bishops falling down upon their Knees before King *James*, begging with the greatest Earnestness, that there might be no Reformation of such Things as were complained of in the *English Liturgy* for the Ease of tender Consciences. So in Queen *Elisabeth's* Reign, viz. in 1584, when Archbishop *Whitgift*, and the other *English* Clergy in *Convocation*, did draw up an *Address* to the Queen, wherein they stiled themselves, *Her Majesty's poor distressed Supplicants*, because of the *Bill* which at that Time was depending before the House of Commons against *Pluralities* and *Non-residences*. And 'tis known what Opposition such have always made to the Reformation of the *English Liturgy*, tho' there be many Things therein, which in my humble Opinion have no

K                      Founda-

† Enq. into Orig. Nat. &c. p. 294.

Foundation in the Word of God, as hath been made evident by many solid Divines, and other learned Men.

3. Further, this may be called an *Anti-Reformation Principle*, because, according to this Principle there can be no Reformation in Things amiss in a Church, unless the *Clergy*, at least the most of them, shall declare for it. And such as have read our Ecclesiastical History, to them nothing is more manifest, than that our Reformation from Popery, both in *Scotland* and in *England* was carried on, not only without the Consent, but in Opposition to the Body of the Clergy or generality of them, who required blind Obedience from the People.

*Tim.* I acknowledge what is just now advanced demonstrates the Doctrine of blind Obedience to be an *Anti-Reformation Principle*. But go on.

*Iren.* As a 17th Argument it would be considered, That seeing our *Lord Jesus Christ*, the sole Head and King of *Zion*, hath given Laws to his Church and Subjects, recorded in his sacred Word; therefore it is high Presumption and Arrogancy, was it in the highest Church Judicature upon Earth, to make any new Law, to bind the Consciences of his Subjects to Obedience, his Law being perfect. The highest Authority or Power he hath given to any Church-Men, is an Authority to see his Laws put in Execution to the outmost of their Power; therefore we owe them no Obedience, unless they can show the King of Glory his Authority or Mandate in his Word, requiring such Obedience to their Injunctions, *Isa.* 33. 22. There the Church, speaking of the glorious Lord, says, *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, and he will save us.* It is he alone who is our *Law-giver* or *Statute-maker*; he alone is given of the Father to be a Head to his Church. And when he sent forth his Apostles to preach and teach all Nations, as Pastors and Rulers in his Church, tho' they had an universal Commission to preach to all Nations, yet they were not left to teach or enact any Thing but what he commanded them; all the Obedience they had Authority to require, it was only Obedience to what Christ their Lord had com-  
manded

manded to be done; as is manifest from the three last Verses of the Gospel according to *Matthew*. As all the Authority the Church of Christ or her highest Judicatures hath is from Christ, so he hath restricted them to see that they taught nothing, commanded nothing, but what he commanded them. And it is undoubtedly a Sin in any Minister or others, in religious Matters, to yield Obedience to them, if they cannot show their Lord's Authority, requiring such Things as they enjoin. Indeed we are immediately to do all that Christ commands, we are to yield blind Obedience to whatsoever he enjoins, tho' never so contrary to our secular Interest; but this Obedience is due to none else. I own that by the exprefs Law of Christ, all are called, not only to honour his Ambassadors, but also to obey them, if they abide by their Instructions; but he hath not given them any legislative Power; we have but one Law-giver, as says the Apostle *James* \*. *Hales* speaking of *Church Authority and Traditions*, says of the first, that it is none; and of Tradition, that *for the most Part it is a Figment*, P. 18. And when *Laud* Archbishop of *Canterbury* had quarrelled him for that Expression among others, in his Answer to the Bishop, he says, "If I say  
 " of the *Authority of the Church* that it is none, I know  
 " of no Adversary that I have, the Church of *Rome*  
 " only excepted; for this cannot be true, except we  
 " make the Church Judge of Controversies, the contrary  
 " to which we generally maintain against that Church."  
 As the eminently learned Dr. *Owen* says †, "There is  
 " indeed a Derivation of Power and Authority from  
 " him unto others, but it extends itself no further,  
 " save only that they shall direct, teach and command  
 " those whom he sends them unto, to do and observe  
 " what he hath commanded, *Mat. 28. 20. He builds his*  
 " *own House, he is over his own House*, he hath con-  
 " stitute its State, and gives Laws for its Rule, *Heb.*  
 " 3. 3, 4, 5, 6." Indeed as the judicious *Manton* says ‡,

K 2

Some

\* *Jam. 4. 12.*† *Enquiry into Origin. Page 22.*‡ *On James, P. 497*



" Some Power the Church hath in Rites of *Decency*  
 " and *Expediency* and *Order*, by Vertue of that general  
 " Canon, *1 Cor.* 14. 40. (tho' that Text carries the  
 " Face of a *Restraint* rather than an *Allwance*, and  
 " doth not so much *enlarge* as *moderate* Church Power,  
 " as, says he, I have elsewhere cleared :) But in the  
 " main Matters, the Church can only *declare Laws*, not  
 " make them; and tho' in Matters indifferent, she can  
 " direct to what is suitable to *Order* and *Decency*; yet  
 " these Directions should be so managed, that they do  
 " not take away the Nature of the Thing; and tho'  
 " Christian Liberty be *restrained*, it must not be *infrin-*  
 " *ged*. It is the Injury of Antichrist to usurp an Au-  
 " thority over the Church of God, and this is the very  
 " Spirit of Antichristianism, to give Laws to the Con-  
 " science. The setting up another Law-giver, is pro-  
 " perly Antichristianism, for then there is one Head set  
 " against another, and human Authority against divine.  
 " It is *Paul's* Character of Antichrist, *2 Thess.* 2. 4,  
 " That he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, that  
 " is, making himself absolute Lord of Conscience, bring-  
 " ing them to his Obedience, working them to his  
 " Advantage." He whom the Father hath set as King  
 upon his holy Hill of *Zion*, is to be obeyed *intuitu vo-*  
*luntatis*, tho' we could see no other Reason for Obedi-  
 ence but his Will and Command; yet all the Injuncti-  
 ons of the highest in the World are to be examined  
 by his Laws, and if contrary thereto they are to be  
 rejected. *Calvin* commenting on this Scripture, *Jam.*  
 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and*  
*to destroy*, he says, " Men would have us more modest  
 " than to call the *Pope Antichrist*, but as long as he  
 " doth exercise a Tyranny over the Conscience, we  
 " shall never give over that Term; nay, we shall  
 " go further, and call those Members of *Antichrist*,  
 " that take such Snares upon their Consciences." It  
 concerns many among us to consider this.

*Tim.* But, where Scripture is silent, may not human  
 Authority interpose, having Recourse to the Reason of  
 Things,

Things, and the Rights of Society, making Rules or Laws for its Well-being and better Regulation?

*Iren.* It is readily granted, that human Societies may make what Laws they think proper and convenient for the Good and Well-being of their Society, if they do not contradict the Divine Law : I also grant, that the Church of Christ hath some Things in common with other Societies, as the appointing of Time and Place of Meeting, with the external Order of publick Worship, and the like. But then it must be carefully adverted to, that the Church of Christ is not merely a *voluntary Society*, but a Society and Community, formed and constituted by the Lord *Jesus*, *Zion's* only King and Law-giver, who has made sufficient Provision for his Church her Well-being. *The Law of our Lord being perfect, and being given by Inspiration of God, is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works* \* ; and therefore stands not in Need of such human Regulations as may those Societies which are merely *voluntary Societies* among Men, and not of his Institution. So that, to argue from the one to the other, is not valid.

*Tim.* But doth not that condemn the Fathers, who from the 4th and 5th Century downward did make such Laws and Rules?

*Iren.* I own, in my Opinion, they were faulty in acting as if Christ's Law had not been perfect for the Government of his Church. They brought in many new Institutions : and having begun, those that followed never left off, adding Laws, Constitutions and Canons for the Government of the Church, till they issued, as one says, in that *Sink of Abominations*, the *Canon Law*.

*Tim.* Go on to another Argument. |

*Iren.* It may be considered as an 18th Argument against blind Obedience to the highest Judicature, That we find such highly commended in the Holy Scripture, who

\* 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

who would not believe and obey the Apostles of Christ themselves, without examining what they taught and commanded; as in the Case of the *Bereans*, *Acts* xvii. 11. where the Spirit of God gives them the Epithet of *noble*, or renowned and honourable; because they searched the Scriptures daily and diligently, to see if what the Apostles taught had Foundation in, or was agreeable to, the Scripture. So 2 *Peter* i. 19. there the Apostle says, they *do well*, or are to be highly commended, who take heed to what is spoken in the Scripture, which is more to be relied upon *than a Voice immediately from Heaven: Ye do well*; ye do that which is well pleasing to that God in whose Love is Life, and *he whom God commendeth is approved of him*, as 2 *Cor.* x. 18.

*Tim*, I think this Argument cannot be contradicted.

*Iren.* I proceed to a 19th Argument, which is this, That the Lord hath commanded us to be *Followers of them who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises* \*. We are to follow them both in Principle and Practice: And the Apostle commends the *Thessalonians*, because they *became Followers of the Churches of God, which in Judea were in Christ Jesus* †: And, in writing to the *Philippians*, he exhorts, saying, ‡ *Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, or venerable, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things.* Now, the Doctrine of *private Judgment*, in Opposition to the Doctrine of *blind Obedience* to the highest of Church Judicatures, as it is *true, honest or venerable, just, pure and lovely*, so it is a Doctrine of *good Report, of Virtue and Praise* among orthodox Divines, yea, among the Generality of sound Protestants; and therefore it is to be *thought upon* so as to be loved, esteemed, maintained, adhered unto, and earnestly contended for:

Few

\* *Heb.* 6. 12.

† 1 *Thess.* 2. 14.

‡ *Chap.* 4. 8.



Few Protestant Divines, who have had Occasion in their Writings to touch this Point, but have given Testimony to this Truth, declaring against all *blind Obedience*. And passing at this Time many eminent foreign Divines, and many eminent Divines in *England*, both among Dissenters, and of the established Church, at present I shall confine myself to some few in the Church of *Scotland*, if you please to hear them.

*Tim.* I shall be very glad to hear them.

*Iren.* Then the first I mention is the famous *John Knox*, who, in one of the *Additions* to his *Letter* to the Queen Regent, says, "This is our chief Proposition, That in the Religion of God, his own Word ought only to be considered; That no Authority of Man or Angel ought, in that Case, to be respected:" And there, speaking of Councils, he says, "I will prove by a *Council*, that of more Authority is the Sentence of one Man (founded upon the simple Truth of God) than is the Determination of the whole Council, without the Assurance of the Word." And, in another of those *Additions*, he says, "Heavy shall the Judgment be which shall apprehend such Blasphemers of God's Majesty, who dare be so bold as to affirm, that God hath commanded any Creature to be obeyed against himself," that is, against his Word.

2. That eminent Servant of Christ, *Mr. Alexander Henderson*, who, even as *Coallier* says, was a Person of Learning, Elocution and Judgment, he 1646, in his Conference with King *Charles I.* said to his Majesty's Argument, *viz.* That when the Scripture is doubtful, we must have Recourse to the Fathers; he replied, "That notwithstanding the Decrees of Councils, and the Resolutions of the Fathers, a Liberty must be left for a Judgment of Discretion, as had been sufficiently shown by Bishop *Davenant*, and others."

3. Again, the great *Mr. George Gillespie*, who tho' he died in his younger Years, yet *Rutherford* says of him, That he had done more for Christ in his Day, than an hundred godly gray haired Pastors; he in his Epistle

to all the Reformed Churches, prefixed to his *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies*, p. 13. says, "Moreover, because the Fore-deck and Hind-deck of all our Opposite's Probations do resolve and rest finally into the Authority of a Law; and *Authority* they use as a sharp Knife to cut every *Gordian Knot* which they cannot unloose, and as a dreadful Peal, to sound so loud in all Ears that Reason cannot be heard. We are to obey the Church, but commanding and teaching right Things. *The Church*, says he, *has no Power, but for our Edification only.*" And again he says, \* "But always I hold myself at this sure Ground, that I am never bound in Conscience to obey the Ordinances of the Church, except they be evidently lawful and expedient. This is that *sine quo non obligant*, and also which doth chiefly bind, tho' it be not the only Thing that bindeth."

4. Again, Professor *Rutherford*, whose Judgment I cited formerly from his *Due Right of Presbyteries*, so in his Treatise on *Conscience*, p. 41. where, speaking of the Power of Synods, his Words are remarkable where he says; "For neither Prophet, nor Apostle, nor Angel from Heaven, nor Church, can lay Commands upon me, imposing or binding under Pain of *Censures* to that which is unsound, and false, or unjust, or wicked: And if People shall find their Decrees truly to be so after Trial, they have Power to reject them."

5. That eminent Servant of Christ Mr. *James Wood* Professor of Theology in the University of *St. Andrews*, in his *Refutation* of Mr. *Lockyer*, he gives the clearest Testimony to this Truth, and also to the People's Right of electing their Pastors, saying, † "First we grant, as to the Manner of the calling of Ministers and Officers of the Church, That to all the People belongeth the Power to nominate and elect the Persons to be their own Church Officers; and that to put upon a People who are Christians, and in a Capacity to elect, any  
" Church

\* P. 33. Disp. against Cer.

† Page 201, 202, 203.

" Church Officer without their Consent and Election,  
 " is *unwarrantable Intrusion*."

6. The Reverend Mr. *David Dickson*, Professor of Divinity in the College of *Edinburgh*, gives Testimony to this Truth in his *Truth's Victory over Error*, p. m. 178, where he puts the Question; " Is not the requiring an implicate Faith, and an absolute and blind Obedience to the Church, or any Man, a destroying of Liberty of Conscience and Reason also?" To which he answers in the Affirmative, adducing five or six Arguments, in so many Lines, in Confirmation of his Affirmation.

7. That eminent solid Divine Mr. *Robert Fleeming*, sometime Minister at *Cambuslang*, in his *Confirming Work of Religion*, p. 33. gives the clearest Testimony against believing with implicate Faith, and obeying any with blind Obedience; where, speaking of the Popish Creed and Principles, according to these, he says, " A Man must extinguish his Reason and Conscience, and he must abandon those Principles of natural Reason in the most necessary use thereof, which God himself hath planted in Man's Soul, so as not to trust his own Eyes but others in that great Interest of his eternal State, and with his own Consent be shut out from all proper Knowledge of the Rule of his Religion, yea, account a blind and unlimited Obedience to Men among the highest Excellencies of Faith."

8. The Reverend Mr. *John Carstairs*, who I think was *Durham's* Colleague in *Glasgow*, and did write the Preface to most of his Works, he, in the Preface to *Durham's* Sermons on Conscience, is very pointed in this Particular, as Page 8. he says; " No meer human Laws do directly, immediately, and of themselves, bind the Conscience; so neither hath God given a Power to any of the superior Powers on Earth to enjoin Obedience to Commands that are cross to his own Injunctions, which all are obliged indispensibly to obey." And there speaking against *Hobbs* his Doctrine of the *publick Conscience*, or blind Obedience to the Commands of the Civil Magistrate, he says; " We



“ may thus throw away our Bibles, as the Rule of good  
 “ and evil Actions, and all betake ourselves to the Civil  
 “ Law, as the only Rule, and the Legislator as the alone  
 “ Judge ; since he may as well divest a Man of human  
 “ Nature, and unman him, as deprive him of a private  
 “ Judgment of Discretion, or of a private discretive  
 “ Judgment in Reference to his own Actions.”

9. The Sentiments of the Church of *Scotland* on this Head are no where to be found more plainly, than in the Writings of the *Publick Resolutioners*, particularly in their *Review and Examination* of that Piece entituled, *Protesters no Subverters, or Presbytery no Papacy*. This *Review* consists of no less than 139 *Quarto* Pages. Tho’ through the whole of that Performance they be arguing against the Conduct of the *Protesters*, because some of them had refused Subjection to their Sentences against them ; yet in sundry Places of that *Review* they give full and clear Testimony to this Truth of *private Judgment*, as due to all private Christians ; particularly p. 94. where they say : “ We acknowledge all Men to  
 “ be fallible and Liars, to have no Privilege or Autho-  
 “ rity to do Wrong ; and that their Sentences are *regu-*  
 “ *læ regulatæ*, and do not oblige the Conscience, save  
 “ in so far as they are conform to the Word.” And p. 128. speaking of Ecclesiastical Judges, they say ;  
 “ In Case of unrighteous Judgment, we neither ap-  
 “ prove nor give active Obedience : Yea, we are free,  
 “ for the Liberation of our own Souls, to contradict  
 “ even an Oecumenick Council, Angels, Prophets and  
 “ Apostles, if they determine contrary to the Word of  
 “ God.” There is much more to this Purpose in that *Review* ; and in this they perfectly agreed with the *Protesters*. Had ever any in the Church of *Scotland*, of Presbyterian Principles, stood up for blind Obedience to Superiors, it might been thought more readily it would been the Publick Resolutioners, when writing against the Protesters ; but you see how far they were from this.

10. Professor *Jamieson*, in his *Nanzianzeni Quærela*, Page 132, says, “ Herein I am a true Son of the pri-  
 “ mitive

"mitive Church, whose Doctors have taught me, that  
 "when the Dictates of God, and these of Men, who-  
 "soever they be, interfere, and through human Cor-  
 "ruption are set in Competition, I ought to hold to  
 "the first, and in Comparison herewith to despise the  
 "latter."

*Lastly*, To instance no more, the learned Mr. *Dunlop*, in his *Preface* to the *Collection of Confessions*, Page 70, says, "Every private Person must judge for himself; nor can any Man, without he shew a plain Commission from Heaven, which he will never be able to produce, pretend to judge in Matters of Religion for another, or oblige him to a Compliance with his Dictates :". And as no Man, so no Society of Men, no Church, no Assembly, can judge for us. And in the 80th Page, when speaking of *human Composures, Creeds and Confessions*, he says, "Every Man must prefer to their Authority what, to him, seems founded on Reason and Revelation; the smallest Grain of sound Reason or inspired Testimony weighing down a Cart-load of human Canons and Confessions." And this was when writing in Vindication of Confessions.

*Tim.* Since you said, You had many eminent Divines in *England* among *Presbyterian Dissenters*, whom you could cite as being plain and positive for the Doctrine of private Judgment, and against blind Obedience to the Commands of the highest of Church Judicatures, seeing some would have that to be strange Doctrine; If you pleased, I would you might just now instance a few of them, though you formerly passed them by.

*Iren.* With all my Heart, at your Desire I will. Now, the first I mention is the Reverend and Learned Mr. *Hudson*, in his *Essence and Unity of the Church Catholick visible*, dedicated, as told you formerly, to the *Westminster Assembly*, there again and again he asserts, that the Election of a Minister to a particular Congregation is *an Act of Liberty in the People* \*. So though he owns, and very justly, that there is a Sub-

L 2

ordination

\* P. 48, 138, 140.

*ordination of particular Churches to greater Assemblies*; yet, says he, *It is not absolute and arbitrary, but in the Lord*: Adding afterwards \*, “Although Councils are  
 “ very Reverend, and to be submitted unto in the Lord,  
 “ yet are they not infallible, but may err: They are  
 “ not *regula regu'ans*, but *regulanda*, and to be tried  
 “ by the Word of God; and, if they speak not ac-  
 “ cording to that, they are not to be obeyed; *Clavis*  
 “ *errans non ligat*.” And he, as all Presbyterians  
 acknowledge, asserts, “the Power of Synods or Assem-  
 “ blies is not barely *swasive* and *consultatory*, but au-  
 “ thoritative, and to be submitted unto by those from  
 “ whom their Delegation is, so far as their Acts are  
 “ according to the Word of God.”

Again, 2. The very learned *Poole*, in his excellent  
 Treatise intituled, *The Nullity of the Romish Faith* †,  
 says, “It is a Speech fitter for a Beast than for a Man,  
 “ to say, Pastors are simply to be heard in all Things,  
 “ as did *Stapleton*; or to say with Cardinal *Bellarmino*,  
 “ that a Christian is bound to receive the Church's  
 “ Doctrine without Examination.” Again, he says,  
 “ Nor is it unjust, but necessary for the Preservation of  
 “ Order, and Prevention of worse Mischiefs, that there  
 “ should be a supreme, though fallible Authority, be-  
 “ yond which there might be no Appeal. And as it is  
 “ no Injustice, that there lyes no Appeal beyond the  
 “ supreme Magistrate in Civil Affairs, though he be  
 “ confessed to be fallible; so neither can it be any  
 “ Injustice, that there be no Appeal beyond the su-  
 “ preme Ecclesiastical Judicature in Church Matters,  
 “ though it be fallible; provided it be granted (which  
 “ the *Protestants* with the *Fathers* do assert, and have  
 “ proved) that such Judicature do not bind the Con-  
 “ science, but only regulate the outward Acts, and  
 “ prevent visible Confusions.” This says, that in  
*Poole's* Opinion, such as are for blind Obedience to  
 the Commands of any, though a supreme Judicature of  
 the Church, are opposite to the Doctrine of the An-  
 tients,

\* P. 164, 179.

† P. 43.



ments, and also to Protestants, going in to a Popish Principle, forsaking a Protestant one.

3. So that worthy Servant of Christ Mr. Jenky, who, I think, was a Member of the *Savoy Conference*, in his Commentary on *Jude* ver. 4. says, "All our Obedience to earthly Lords must be only such as this, only Lord allows, and only in the Lord. We must take heed of the Sin of the *Israelites* willingly to walk after the Commandment; and that of the Papists blind Obedience to any Superior. The greatest Lords in the World are but *Rules ruled*, Jesus Christ is the only *Rule ruling*."

4. So that acute Author, the learned Mr. *Alsop*, in his *Melius Inquirendum*\*, affirms, That "a rational Suspicion of the Breach of a Divine Law is enough, in the Apostle's Judgment, to justify the Suspension of my own Act; and if it prove no other than a Thing indifferent in itself, yet such Dissatisfaction will excuse from Sin;" citing for Proof *Rom. xiv. 5, 14, 23*. And there, in arguing with his Opposite, he speaks thus, "Ay (but will he say) you ought to have trusted wiser Men than yourselves, and not like the *Antipodes* to have run upon your Heads: Oh! but then comes in the *Romanist*, and falls upon his Bones; You ought to have trusted wiser Men than yourselves, your Superiors in the Church from whom you separated. Nay, but replies he, we have a Judgment of Discretion, and ought to be Masters of our own Reason, so far as to take Cognizance of our own Acts. Well, the *Nonconformists* catch that Word by the End, before it be well out of his Mouth. We are for a Judgment of Discretion too, and ought to be Masters so far of our own Reasons, and not to act against them." And then he adds, "Nothing can be returned that I can foresee, but that it is not for such pitiful Sneaks as the *Dissenters* to talk of Conscience, and a Judgment of Discretion; it is enough for the *Gendarms of Reason* to make Use of that

“ that Plea against *Rome*.” And indeed, as the learn’d  
*Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, says, “ Let Men turn  
 “ and wind themselves which Way they will, by the  
 “ very same Arguments that any will prove Separation  
 “ from the Church of *Rome* lawful, because she requi-  
 “ red unlawful Things as Conditions of her Commu-  
 “ nion; it will be proved lawful not to conform to any  
 “ suspected or unlawful Practice required by any  
 “ Church Governors upon the same Terms, if the  
 “ Thing so required be, after serious and sober Enqui-  
 “ ry, judged unwarrantable by a Man’s own Con-  
 “ science.”

Again, in the 5th Place, Those *English* Dissenters,  
 who were the Authors of that Piece intituled, *The Case*  
*of indifferent Things in the Worship of God examined*,  
 published 1683, who say, Page 5th, “ Though the  
 “ Will of God be the *primary Rule*, yet a Man’s pra-  
 “ ctical Judgment is and must be the *proximate Rule*  
 “ of his Actions: For he who doth what he verily  
 “ believeth to be unlawful, is equally guilty with him  
 “ who doth what indeed is so; for though his *think so*  
 “ be not the *Measure of Sin*, yet it is to him the Mea-  
 “ sure of it; because he knoweth no better, nor can  
 “ better inform himself, and God hath set him no other  
 “ Judge. And were it not that we thus believe, we  
 “ should think a Membership in the Church of *Rome*  
 “ much more adviseable than in any *Protestant* Church.  
 “ The *Papists* have Superiors enough, and many of  
 “ them Men of great Learning and Judgment, in  
 “ whose Determinations were it lawful to acquiesce,  
 “ and to submit the practical Judgment of the Consci-  
 “ ence blindfolded to theirs, we might quickly arrive  
 “ at a Catholick Unity, the most desireable Thing in  
 “ the World.” And in the 41st Page, speaking to the  
 Divines of the Church of *England*, they say, “ Certainly  
 “ Divines, who ought to be no Smitters of their Fellow  
 “ Servants, (though their Lord for a while delayeth  
 “ his Coming)—If indeed they have any Value for the  
 “ Glory of God, for the Good and Peace of others  
 “ Souls, for the Preservation of the Protestant Religion,  
 “ which

" (which dies that Day that private Christian Judgment  
 " of Discretion is destroyed) for the Union of Prote-  
 " stants against Popish Adversaries, for any Thing in-  
 " deed that is good and lovely, they will beseech their  
 " Superiors to break this long Law of Contention;  
 " which hath now been drawing much above an hun-  
 " dred Years, and cut asunder many of the Lord's  
 " Prophets," &c.

Here again, 6thly, I instance those eminent Ministers  
 and Elders, who by Authority of Parliament met in  
 a Provincial Assembly in the Province of *London*, No-  
 vember 2. 1649, they also give clear Testimony to this  
 in their *Vindication of the Presbyterial Government and*  
*Ministry*, a Book consisting of 152 Quarto Pages,  
 subscribed in the Name, and by the Appointment of  
 that Assembly by *George Walker* Moderator, *Arthur*  
*Jackson* and *Edmund Calamy* Assessors, There, giving  
 an Account of what Sort of Government the Presby-  
 terian Government is, they say, Page 23d, "It is not  
 " a domineering, hierarchical, magisterial Government,  
 " that lords it over People's Consciences, requiring Sub-  
 " jection to the Decrees of it with blind and slavish  
 " Obedience; but it is a *Stewardship*, a *Ministry*, a  
 " painful and laborious Service. We say, that all the  
 " Determinations, even of National Synods, are to be  
 " obeyed no further than they agree with the Word  
 " of God; and that a Synod is *judex judicandus*:  
 " That Congregations are to examine with the Judg-  
 " ment of *Discretion* what is sent to them from Sy-  
 " nods. There is *no more Obedience required to the*  
 " *Decrees of a National Synod than the Independents*  
 " *claim to the Decree of a particular Congregation.*"

Moreover, 7thly, Both Presbyterians and Indepen-  
 dents in and about *London*, in their *Syncrretism*, and  
 Heads of Agreement entered into *Anno* 1689, declare  
 their Judgment to the same Purpose; for, in their  
*Head of Churches and Church Members*, Article 6th,  
 they affirm, "That each particular Church hath Right  
 " to choose their own Officers:" And in their 2d  
 Head, 5th Article, they speak of the Person that is to  
 be



be ordained to the Ministry, his "being chosen by the  
 "Brotherhood of that particular Church, over which  
 "he is to be set:" And in the 6th Head, speaking of  
*Synods*, they affirm, That the Elders and Members of  
 "particular Churches "ought to have a reverential  
 "Regard to the Judgment of such Synods, and not  
 "dissent therefrom, without apparent Grounds from  
 "the Word of God." There, according to the stated  
 Judgment both of Presbyterians and Independents in  
 and about the City of *London* (and, if I rightly remem-  
 "ber, this Agreement was generally approved by all  
 those different Denominations through *England*) that  
 it is the People's Right to elect their own Pastors; and  
 also that it is lawful and Duty to dissent from the  
 Judgment or Determination of Synods or Assemblies,  
 if they appear to them to be contrary to the Word of  
 God.

*Tim.* If you can Instance any eminent Persons in the  
 established Church of *England*, declaring for this private  
 Judgment, and against blind Obedience to superior  
 Church Judicatures, I would be further obliged if you  
 should name some of them; for the Church of *England*  
 is ordinarily said to be against *private Judgment*, and  
 for the People's yielding *blind Obedience* to their Supe-  
 riors in the Church.

*Iren.* If your Memory hath not failed, you may re-  
 member I have already instanced sundry as eminent  
 Men as ever were in the Church of *England*, who openly  
 and plainly have declared themselves for our Side of the  
 Question, as 1. Bishop *Davenant*, 2. *Hales* of *Eaton*  
*College*, 3. *Chillingworth*, 4. *Stillingfleet*, 5. Dr. *Field*,  
 6. Dr. *Barrow*, and 7. even Archbishop *Laud* himself,  
 when arguing against the *Jesuites*, 8. also the Bishop  
 of *Hereford* in his *Legacy*, 9. Bishop *Burnet*, yea, 10.  
 whom I should have instanced in the *first* Place, King  
*James VI.* in his *Confession of Faith*.

So also in the 11th Place, Bishop *Croft* in his *naked*  
*Truth*, P. 4. says, "How impertinent, how irrational,  
 "how impious is it to require a Man to believe any  
 "Thing more than is clearly contained in Scripture;  
 "and

“ and if it be clearly contained there, cannot but believe it; if he do not see it clearly contained, you cannot force either his Sight or his Faith.” And as according to this *English* Prelate, neither a Man’s Sight nor his Faith can be forced, no more can his Obedience, unless it be enjoined in Scripture by the Law of Christ.

So in the 12th Place, Bishop *Bramhall*, who I think came afterwards to be Primate of *Ireland*, when the Papists charged the Church of *England* with Schism, he answered, “ To be separated might be our consequent Will, because we could not help it; but it was far from our antecedent Will, or that we did desire it. If they did impose upon us a Necessity of doing sinful Things, then we did not leave them, but they did drive us from them.” By which Expression he clearly intimates, no Church is to be obeyed, if they impose or require any Thing which is sinful.

So in the 13th Place, Dr. *Edward Reynolds* Bishop of *Chester*, in his Sermons on *Hosea* 14, P. 139. says, “ For tho’ the *Judgment of Interpretation* belongs principally to Ministers of the Word, yet God hath given unto all Believers a Judgment of Discretion to try the Spirits.—For no Man is to pin his own Soul and Salvation by a blind Obedience upon the Words of a Man, who may mislead him, nay not upon the Words of an Angel;—but only and immediately upon the Scripture, except when the Blind lead the Blind, the Leader only should fall into the Ditch, and the other go to Heaven for his blind Obedience in following his Guide towards Hell, whereas our Saviour tells us, both shall fall, *Mat. 15. 14.*”

So in the 14th Place, even Dr. *Sherlock*, P. 25. of that Piece, entitled, *The Case of the Allegiance due to Sovereign Princes*, &c. P. 25. he expresseth himself to this Purpose, *All Loyalists grant, it is an Exception against all Laws, whatever Prince make them, if they contain any Thing in them which is sinful.* And ’tis known, that Loyalists have as much Regard to the Laws of the Prince, as to the *Canons of the Clergy*. Now his

Expression plainly supposes, that all are to judge with a Judgment of private Discretion, whether such Laws be sinful or not, and so to obey or not. The Expression is a plain Condemnation of all such as talk of Law-Makers only, their answering for the Sin, which may be in their Laws.

And also in the 15th and 16th Place, I instanced two of those *English* Divines who were Authors of those 13 Sermons against Popery, published at *Edinburgh*, with the Bishop of *Edinburgh's Imprimatur*, Anno 1687.

Again, in the 17th Place, The learned Mr. *Charles Leslie*, in his *Dissertation concerning private Judgment and Authority*, tho' he is for the submitting of private Judgment in *small Matters* and of *little Consequence*, as in *temporal Affairs*, &c. yet p. 21. he says, "God hath taken more Care of our Souls, and not put our Faith under the absolute Dominion of any. The Apostles disclaimed it, 2 Cor. 1. 24. and again, *If we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* And this was to be proven only by private Judgment, and is a very positive Decision for it, against Authority of the highest Sort next under God himself." And P. 31. commenting on *Mat. 23. 2, 3.* says, "They were only to observe and do what the Synagogue should bid them; and no doubt the Condition was implied, of such Commands being lawful and agreeable to the Word of God. And this is the full of what is meant in our Obedience to any Church or Authority upon Earth." And there he hath more to that Purpose.

*Tim.* Who was this Mr. *Leslie*?

*Iren.* For Answer, he was one most zealous for the Church of *England*: And for his Character you may look to the *Preface* of the *Essay on the Nature, Extent and Authority of private Judgment in Matters of Religion*, dedicated to the Archbishop of *York*, where that Author speaking of Mr. *Leslie*, says of his Writings against *Deism*, *They can never be read too often, or too much commended*: And tho' *Leslie* was *Episcopal* in his Judg-



Judgment, yet he hath given the *Preference to private Judgment* in Competition with *Authority*, yet says this Author, "I cannot think so great a Man would wilfully do any Thing that may lessen the just Authority of the Church, and I question not, but whenever he comes to explain himself, he will give us intire Satisfaction upon this Article." This *Dissertation* was formerly published with his Writings against the *Deists*, and bound in with them; yet now they have been again published without that *Tract*, and could they have prevailed with him to retract his Sentiments or former Assertions upon this Point, I doubt not this had been published to the World, but nothing like this hath appeared; for tho' that *Dissertation* has not been printed with his Book against Deism as formerly, this might be done without his Knowledge or Approbation, yea, perhaps contrary to his Will. Now upon the whole of this, according to the Author, viz. their great Mr. Leslie, *The highest Authority under God himself* has no Authority over private Judgment, that can bind the Conscience, nor according to him, owe we Obedience to any Church Authority upon Earth, unless their Commands be agreeable to the Word of God.

Here also, in the 18th Place, might be added, the learned Dr. Whitaker, who says \*, *Obediendum est ecclesiae sed jubenti ac docenti recta*: "We are to obey the Church, but enjoining and teaching what is right." She hath no Power to command any Thing which is unjust; or, if she do, no Obedience is due unto her; and by our *private Judgment* we are to judge whether the Thing commanded is good and just, or not: And so of many others which might here be added. So you see this is no new Doctrine, no independent Principle, no singular Opinion.

Further, in the 19th Place, Here the learned Dr. Hoadly Bishop of Bangor may be instanced, who in his *Common Rights of Subjects defended*, in Answer to Dr. Sherlock Dean of Chichester his *Vindication of the*

M 2

Cor-

\* De Auth. Scrip. Lib. I. p. 129.

*Corporation and Test Acts*, says, † “ There is this  
 “ Supremacy vested in every Christian, *in his own Be-*  
 “ *half*, that he has a Right to judge for himself in the  
 “ Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation, a Right  
 “ not to be prejudiced by the Claims of Power and Au-  
 “ thority in any Men upon Earth.----- It is in me a  
 “ Principle, I feel it constantly within me, I judge  
 “ other Doctrines and Positions by it; I do not take it  
 “ up in one Page, and lay it down again in the next,  
 “ but maintain it uniformly and equally.” But to tran-  
 scribe all that the Bishop says there in favour of private  
 Judgment, against the Authority of all Superiors, would  
 be to transcribe a great Part of that Book; and there,  
 by the *Dean* his own Expressions, he proves him to  
 be of the same Mind with himself: And indeed the  
*Dean* owns, that this Supremacy is vested in every Man  
 in his own behalf, only he is for putting a Restraint upon  
 it by Superiors. Strange Doctrine! And also the *Dean*  
 owns, that a Persuasion of Errors and Corruptions in  
 the Church will excuse a Separation from it. Now,  
 what is *Persuasion*, but a Person’s or People’s inward  
*private Judgment*.

Here, lastly, I’ll add the Testimony of the learned  
 Dr. *Forbes* of *Conse* Bishop of *Aberdeen*, who, in his *Ire-*  
*nicum*, Cap. 6. Sect. 5. p. m. 379, says, *Quando homines*  
*jubent nos facere quod Deus nos facere prohibet, oppor-*  
*tet parere Deo potius quam hominibus; Etiam si aliqui*  
*subjectionem illis hominibus in omnibus debeamus.* And  
 in the Margin, opposite to these Words, he writes, *Obe-*  
*dientie regula perpetua*; a perpetual Rule of Obedience.

*Tim.* Could you not adduce, for Confirmation of this,  
 the Judgment and Sentiments of the Ancient *Fathers*  
 and General Councils, particularizing also some of our  
 worthy Reformers, and foreign Protestant Divines.

*Iren.* Many of the *Fathers* and sundry Councils might  
 be adduced, but I cannot tarry particularly to insist upon  
 them. As for the *Fathers*, tho’ sundry of them were  
 eminent for Parts and Piety, yet many of their Writings  
 have been sadly vitiated by the Church of *Rome*, so that  
 little

little Stress is to be laid upon them. *Buxhornius*, one of the Divinity Professors at the famous University of *Louvain*, tells us, That he was employed by the *Romish Inquisitors* to strike out at least Six hundred Places of the *Antients*, which seemed to make against the *Romish Doctrines*; for which he was so troubled in Mind, that it was an Occasion of his turning *Protestant*; and made him resolve to quit that Religion, which could not defend itself but by such manifest Impostures\*. But if any please to look into *Poole's Nullity of the Romish Faith*, from p. 42. there he may see sundry of the Fathers cited, both from the *Greek and Latin Church*, declaring for this Doctrine, as *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Basil*, *Cyprian*, *Chrysostom*, *Origin*, *Ambrose*, *Jerome*, so also *Augustine*, one of the eminentest of them, who when he was pressed by his Opposite with a Number of the *Fathers*, said; "I have learned to give this Honour and Reverence to the Books of Scripture, to believe there is no Error in them; but as for others, how learned or godly soever they be, I so read them, that I do not believe any Thing to be true because they thought so, but because they proved it so to be by the Scriptures." And as for General Councils, tho' they were the supreme Judicatures from which there was no Appeal, yet their Determinations were not, nor are they to be regarded, except in so far as they agree with the sacred Oracles; for one General Council affirms one Thing, and another decrees the quite contrary; as in the Case of the first Council of *Nice*, zealous for the Divinity of the Lord of Glory, and the Council of *Ariminum*, which was zealous against it. Men are mutable for one Thing To-day, and for the very Reverse To-morrow.

As for our Reformers, I have already shown they were all for the Doctrine of private Judgment, and against blind Obedience to any, the highest of Church Judicatures, showing that the opposite Doctrine is an *Anti-Reformation Principle*. And as for foreign Divines,  
Multi-

\* *Henr. Buxhorn. de Euchar. Lib. 3. initio.*



Multitudes of them might be adduced : I have particularized some of them already, as the learned *Capellus* ; and here I shall add one more, and that is, the learned *Apollonii*, whom *Rutherford* calls a Man of great Weight ; he, in his *jus majestatis circa sacra*, asserts and proves at considerable Length, that the People have a Divine Right to elect their own Pastors, p. 150, &c. so in the plainest Terms he asserts, That the Determinations or Acts of Church Judicatures bind no further than they prove them to be according to the Word of God, of which private Christians are to judge, saying, p. 245, *Tota enim Synodi actio est ministerialis, non ulterius ad fidem astringens, quam possit ostendere Dei verbum esse quod proponit. Nam revera nihil potest de jure probare in theologia absque scriptura. Hinc Synodorum autoritas est ad asserendam veritatem, & jus divinum, non ad illud evertendum, proinde nulla est ejus autoritas cum malum vel falsum præcipit ; Et sicut in hoc casu unicum membrum Ecclesiæ particularis non tenetur recipere judicium sui Synedrii, ita nec Ecclesia particularis judicium Synodi, quamvis Oecumenicæ.* This eminent Divine was employed by the *Walachian Churches in Zealand* to write in their Name ; therefore what he hath written here may be considered as the Judgment of those Churches.

Now, for a 20th Argument, it may be added, That as the Obedience required wants the Stamp of divine Authority, so 'tis contrary to the Dictates of sound Reason ; for there is an Averfation from all blind Obedience, or acting blindly, planted in the Soul of every Man by the Hand of the God of Nature, which can no more be separated from rational Creatures than their very Being itself : Yea, and if this Choice of what we are to do in such Cases should be denied us by any Mortals, in so far are we made meer Brutes : Therefore all ought to guard against degrading themselves, so as to give up with this Privilege of a free Choice in their Actings ; in such a Case we are to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith the great God our Saviour hath made us free. That rational Author *Chillingworth* says, " If the Church commands Things, and judge them fit to be done, yet every  
Man

Man is to judge for himself with the Judgment of Discretion ; otherwise we may do with our Reason and discursive Faculties as the Priest did with the Sword of *Goliath*, wynd them up and lay them by as useles Things. For a Dog is as capable of a Law as a Man, if there be no Choice in his Obedience, nor Discourse in his Choice, nor Reason to satisfy his Discourse."

*Tim.* Is this, of allowing all a Judgment of private Discretion, the Way to overturn all good Order, and to introduce Confusion into the Church of Christ ?

*Iren.* I answer with the learned *Capellus*, † " This " is not to overthrow good Order, or to introduce into " the Church any Confusion, but to maintain the Right " and Liberty planted in the Heart of Man by Nature " itself, namely, That none be compelled to renounce " his Reason, and contrary to the Dictates thereof, by " a blind and brutish Motion, to follow and embrace " whatsoever it shall please certain Men, out of meer " Humour, to command, against the most perfect Rule " of Truth, Righteousness and Equity, namely, the " Word of God contained in the sacred Scripture." It was a commendable true *Apothegme* of the Emperor *Maximilian*, *Conscientiis velle dominari est Arcem coeli invadere.*

*Tim.* I suppose you have finished your Arguments for private Judgment, and against blind Obedience.

*Iren.* The Doctrine of blind Obedience to the highest of Church Judicatures is a Doctrine which is *not* tenable, nor can it be defended by any ; and, if you please, that may be considered as another Argument.

*Tim.* What Way do you prove, that the opposite Doctrine to private Judgment is not tenable ?

*Iren.* I think it is evident from this, that sundry who have been friendly, and very friendly, to the Power and Authority of the Church to command her Inferiors, have yet given up with the Arguments for her Power to enjoin, so as People are to obey upon her Commands, if they cannot judge them to be just and law.

† *Thef. Salmur. Sect. 49. P. 88.*

lawful; as in the Case of the learned Dr. *Isaac Barrow*, instanced on the foregoing 10th Argument. So also King *James*, at the *Hampton Court Conference*, seems to have been sensible of this: Hence when Mr. *Knewstub* proposed the Question, "In case the Church had Power to institute such a Sign [he was speaking of the Sign of the Cross in Baptism] how far such an Ordinance was to bind them, without impeaching their Christian Liberty?" The King answered, "I will not dispute upon that Point.—I will have one Doctrine and one Discipline, one Religion in Substance and Ceremony; and therefore I charge you, never to speak more to that Point, how far you are bound to obey when the Church hath ordained it \*." Seeing the King had not given any such Charge concerning other Points in Dispute, he being a main Disputant himself, that to me says, he saw this was Doctrine which could not be defended. As we are obliged to be ready always to give an Answer to every one that asketh us a Reason of the Hope that is in us †; so I cannot help thinking, could the Question been answered to any Thing like Satisfaction, the King, or some of the Learned *English* Clergy present at that Conference, had not suffered it to pass without some Answer, considering they were there assembled to confer, reason and argue upon such Points.

Here a 3d Instance of the Untenableness of that Doctrine or Principle which is opposite to private Judgment, is to be seen in the Conduct of the learned Dr. *Sherlock* Dean of *Chichester*, in his Vindication of the *Corporation and Test Acts*, where he argues, with all his Might and Main, against the free Use of *private Judgment*, and pleads for the restraining of it by Superiors, which, as his Opposite the Bishop of *Bangor* speaks, leads back inevitably to the grossest Part of Popery. Now the Dean says, † "Tho' the Reformation claimed the Use of the Scriptures as the undoubted Right of every Christian who was capable of using them, yet they (there he is speaking

\* 1 Vol. of Phoenix, p 166.

† Pet. 3. 15.

‡ P. 31.



"speaking of the civil Government in England) had Sense  
 "enough to know, that to leave every Man to make  
 "the best of his Bible without any further Direction  
 "or Restraint, would naturally tend to Confusion, and  
 "fill the Kingdom with all the wild Conceits that Ig-  
 "norance and Enthusiasm could produce.—This Church  
 "was established by Law, and the People of England  
 "were bound to Communion with it as Christian Sub-  
 "jects;" and he immediately adds, "so bound, I mean,  
 "that nothing but a Persuasion of Errors and Corrup-  
 "tions in the Church could excuse a Separation from it."  
 Now, by his allowing that a *Persuasion of Errors and Cor-  
 ruptions being in a Church* is Ground of Separation, he  
 allows of private Judgment, in plain Contradiction to  
 himself. Persuasion is by private Judgment. Upon this  
 the Bishop of Bangor says \*, "We cannot but observe the  
 "Violence of Truth upon all good Understandings, even  
 "at the very Instant when they are labouring to shew  
 "it in another and contrary Light, or to contradict it,  
 "without designing so to do; it is of that Nature that  
 "it forces itself abroad, and extorts a Confession  
 "from the most ingenuous Men, even at the Expence  
 "of palpable Self-Contradiction." And in the 32 Page  
 of that Book, the Dean owns there is a Supremacy  
 vested in every Man in his own Behalf, that is, I hum-  
 bly think, a plain owning that every Christian has this  
 Liberty of judging for himself. And nothing but such  
 a Right can vindicate a Person in separating from any  
 Church of Christ.

Here I'll add a 4th Instance, and that is the Author  
 of the *Dialogues between Timothy and Philatheus*, in  
 his *Essay on the Nature, Extent and Authority of private  
 Judgment*, P. 69. printed 1711, dedicated to the Pri-  
 mate and Metropolitan of England; there in my Opi-  
 nion, after his arguing for the Church's Authority over pri-  
 vate Judgment, or after arguing that we ought to obey the  
 Church whatever our private Judgment be, in my Opini-  
 on, I say, he yields all we plead for: This is when an-  
 swering to an Objection which runs thus, "That if the

N

" Church

“ Church has Authority over private Consciences in  
 “ Matters of Faith, then the Church may command our  
 “ Faith, and oblige us to follow it blindly and impli-  
 “ citely; for whatever Body-politick has Authority,  
 “ may command in those Things to which that Autho-  
 “ rity extends.”

Now to this, that Author answers thus, “ This Ob-  
 “ jection supposes that the Authority of the Church is  
 “ absolute and unlimited, whereas it is restrained to a  
 “ Law or Rule, and can lead us no farther than this  
 “ Law or Rule directs, which it is obliged to take along  
 “ with it all the Way, and to shew us every Step, how  
 “ that Rule, and its own Directions agree together: If  
 “ it exceeds this Rule, or goes contrary to it, then we  
 “ are at Liberty to disobey; because it has no Authority  
 “ but by this Rule, and consequently its Authority  
 “ ceases in those Things which are not according to  
 “ this Rule; and where there is no Authority, there we  
 “ are not obliged to obey.” By these Words I humbly  
 think, he yields all, that we who stand up in Defence of  
 private Judgment do plead for: Grant us but this, taking  
 the Word of God for the Rule, and we ask no more.

Then he immediately adds, “ As to our Right of  
 “ judging when the Church exceeds her Authority,  
 “ this is easily asserted in those Cases; for the Church is  
 “ obliged to convince us by Reason in every one Article;  
 “ and if it cannot, that must be because of some clearer  
 “ Evidence from Scripture, and the primitive Church;  
 “ so that still it is the Authority of the Church that  
 “ directs our private Judgment, and consequently is su-  
 “ perior to it.”

And then he concludes his Answer to that Objection,  
 saying, “ To disbelieve or oppose a Church upon the  
 “ Doctrine of our Saviour and his *Apostles*, or upon  
 “ the Authority of the primitive Church, is not oppo-  
 “ sing our private Judgment to the Judgment of the  
 “ Church, but opposing the usurped or abused Autho-  
 “ rity of a corrupt Church, upon the Authority of a  
 “ pure Church: So that still it is the Authority of the

“ Church

“ Church, and not our own private Judgment only, that  
 “ is to direct us in Matters of Religion.”

There indeed he makes the Judgment of the primitive Church of equal Authority with the Word of God, which is plainly *popish Doctrine*; yea, and if he doth not make their Judgment to be not only equal, but superior to the Scripture, I cannot see how it is the Authority of the Church which directs our private Judgment; for it is the Scriptures alone and not the Authority of any Church, whether ancient or modern that is the Rule ruling our Consciences or private Judgment; yet if he was to stand to the Judgment of the *Fathers* of the primitive Church, as to the Doctrine of *private Judgment*, then sundry of the most famous among them have been instanced already, and many others of them might here be cited declaring for private Judgment, and also for the People's Right to elect their own Pastors.

*Tim.* I see the Patrons of Diocesan Episcopacy lay much Strefs upon the Judgment of that eminent *Father* and Martyr *Cyprian*, and on the Judgment of the Church in the *Cyprianick Age*, as doth the Author against whom you are arguing here.

*Iren.* I do remember that Author, P. 153. when speaking of the Church of *England* her *Reformation* and *Separation* from the Church of *Rome*, “ By this Rent (says he) “ she again joined herself to the pure primitive Church “ of the *Cyprianick Age*!” But will he and his Patrons stand to the Judgment of *Cyprian*, and to the Determination of the Church in that *pure primitive Age*; if so, we would soon agree. And let us take *Cyprian's* 67. Epistle, which contains, not only his own Judgment, but also the Judgment of an *African Synod* with him, in which they declare both for the People's Judgment of Discretion, and also for their divine Right to elect their Ministers, where it is said, *nec sibi plebs blandiatur*, &c. “ Neither let the People flatter themselves that they will “ be free from the Contagion of the Crime, if they communicate with a vitious Priest, and assent unto his “ unlawful Episcopacy.-----Wherefore, a People fearing “ the Lord, and obeying his Commandments should



“ separate from a vitious Priest, and should not partake  
 “ in the Sacrifices of a sacrilegious Priest, seeing they  
 “ principally have the Power either of electing good  
 “ Priests, or rejecting bad ones :”---And there he asserts  
 that *Sacerdotal Ordinations* are just and lawful, when  
 the Candidate to be ordained is examined by the Suffrage and Judgment of all. Now from those Words 'tis  
 manifest in the Judgment of *Cyprian*, in that which is  
 called the *Cyprianick* Age, the People were not obliged  
 to accept of any whom the Patron or Clergy pleased to  
 impose upon them, no, then they chiefly had the Election,  
 and tho' all the Judicatures of the Church had  
 enjoined them to subject themselves to the Ministry of  
 a dissolute or unworthy Minister, if they judged him  
 by the Judgment of private Discretion to be a naughty  
 Person; they were told they should not be free from  
 Guilt, if they did join with him in his Ministrations;  
 they were far from saying, if there was any Guilt the  
 Church would answer for it.

But passing this, to me 'tis strange the Church of  
*England* should lay so much Stress upon the Judgment  
 of the primitive Church, when so little Stress can be  
 laid upon the Fathers or Councils in ancient Times,  
 after the three first Centuries at least; to me it says  
 plainly, some of their peculiar Doctrines anent Doctrine  
 and Discipline have not sufficient Warrant in the Scriptures  
 of Truth. And in my Opinion, their own Champions  
 for Diocesan Episcopacy, by their Manner of  
 pleading for this, they evidence so much, as might  
 easily be shown.

*Tim.* Could you prove the Writings of the primitive  
 Church are not much to be depended upon?

*Iren.* For present I refer you to the Account the  
 learned *Bower* gives in the second Volume of his late  
*History of the Lives of the Popes* \*, where he shows,  
 about the End of the 6th Century, “ What was deemed  
 “ Heresy at *Rome*, was received as sound Doctrine at  
 “ *Constantinople* ;” and *vice versa*, what was rejected  
 by the one as rank Heresy, was received by the other

\* Pages 494, 495, 496.

as the true Catholick Doctrine; showing also, how Councils had been corrupted, curtailed and interpolated, having Things foisted into them narrating how *Anastasiu Bibliothecarius*, in Preface to the 8th Council, reproached the *Greeks* 800 Years ago with having corrupted, not only the Council of *Ephesus*, but all the other Councils except that of *Nice*; and that Charge the *Greeks* returned upon the *Latines*, adding, that they had not even spared the Council of *Nice*, but attempted to pass upon the World the Decrees of *Sardica* for the Decrees of that Council." And having shown at length, that Councils are not to be depended upon, he says, "What then have we left, in this Uncertainty, concerning the Authenticity of the Councils, of their Decrees, Creeds, Definitions, &c. to build our Faith, upon but the Scriptures; To build upon any other Foundation whatever, is building like the foolish Man in the Gospel, on the Sand." The Writings of the Fathers, and the Decrees of Councils, are a sandy Foundation indeed.

*Tim.* You said just now, the Champions for *Diocesan Episcopacy*, by their Manner of pleading for this, evidence it hath not Foundation in the Scriptures of Truth: Now I would gladly know, what Way you could make that evident.

*Iren.* To me 'tis plain, first from the learned Dr. *Hammond* in his *Dissertationes Quatuor*, &c. or his four *Dissertations* for *Episcopacy* against Dr. *Blondel* and others; where at some length he endeavours to prove, That in all the New Testament, no *simple Presbyter* is to be found; that all Ministers of the Gospel mentioned there, be they called Ministers, Pastors, Stewards or Presbyters, that they are true and real Bishops. Mr. *Dodwell* again, another eminent Champion for *Prelacy*, he saw, that the Arguments adduced for *Prelacy* from the Difference that was between the *Apostles* and the *Seventy*, from the pretended Episcopacy of *Timothy* and *Titus*, &c. they were so many Abuses of holy Writ; and hence he asserted, that the *Apostles* at first ordained no Bishops, but only *simple Presbyters*. There

two of the greatest Champions for Prelacy are plainly at Variance upon this Head. Mr. *Dodwell*, in his *Parænesis ad exteros de nupero schismate Anglicano*, is earnest in perswading People, there is no Foundation for *Episcopacy* in the *New Testament*, affirming and contending, That in the Days of the Apostles all Churches were subject to that of *Jerusalem*; asserting that Things continued so till the Time of *Trajan* in the 105, or according to others in the 106 of our Lord; so that, according to him, the Constitution of Episcopal Government is later than the New Testament, and so not to be sought for there. There is a third zealous Champion for Prelacy, and that is Mr. *Thomas Edwards*, in his *Diocesan Episcopacy proved from holy Scriptures*, &c. who tells us, he hath pulled down the whole Frame of Episcopacy, and raised it again after a new and better Fashion; boasting of a new Key found out by his great Labour, which will do Wonders: His Key is a Distinction between a *Diocesan Prelate* and a *Diocesan Bishop*; the former of whom, according to him, had no Gift of Teaching, and meddled not with Doctrine, tho' he was superior to Teachers in Point of Government; and this Kind of Prelacy, he says, continued only during the extraordinary Dispensation. The *Diocesan Bishop*, according to him, is he who hath the chief Charge both of Government and Doctrine, and has the Name of Bishop appropriated to him for ever. And p. 2. he owns, of all who formerly had endeavoured to bring Episcopacy from the Scripture, they had proved unhappy in the Attempt, and had not cleared it from the Scripture to please him; seeming to call them freakish People, who had built Castles in the Air, and set the World a madding, saying of them, that they did not understand what they said, nor whereof they affirmed in their Proofs from Scripture, tho' p. 231. and 232 he says, Better Pens than his had proved Episcopacy from the *Fathers*. And it may justly be inferred from that Assertion, those *better Pens* would also have proven it from the Scripture, had it not been impossible



to find it there. So it may be thought, 'tis from this that many of the Church of *England* are so much concerned to have the primitive Church brought in with the Scriptures of infallible Truth, for proving Things.

Now, passing this Digression, if I be not far mistaken, every one of the above Arguments for *private Judgment*; are valid, and of Force, and against *blind Obedience* to our highest Superiors upon Earth; yet if but one of these Arguments be good, 'tis enough to prove what is here in Controversy.

*Tim.* Before parting, I desire your Judgment of a very important Point, which is, Who is to be Judge when Superiors think one Thing, and their Inferiors think another; Superiors judging the Thing commanded to be lawful, and their Inferiors judge it is sinful, or at least dubious, and therefore cannot be done in Faith?

*Iren.* Now to this I answer, That none breathing hath nor can have so much Right or Privilege to judge what is Sin or not, as the Person or Persons who shall be damned if they transgress the Divine Law, and who shall be rewarded of God if they obey him: As one says, "He that sins at another's Command, will hardly perswade him to be his Substitute in the Condemnation, nor will God accept him for the Sinner's Proxy." As we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, so every one, as the Apostle says, must give an Account of himself to God, Rom. xiv. 10, 12. Beyond peradventure, every one has Right to be his own Judge, or to judge for himself in all Cases or Actions wherein his eternal Happiness or endless Misery are concerned: Even the learned *Thorndike* said, "When all is done, Men must and will be Judges for themselves." So the very learned *Whitaker* says, "Every Man ought to depend upon his own Judgment, not on the Suggestion and Arbitriment of any Men whatsoever." And adds he, *Unusquisque sibi iudex esse debet*; Every one ought to judge for himself.

*Hales* in his above-cited *Tract*, P. 8. says of this or an

an alike Question, "It is a Question which hath been often made, but I think scarcely ever truly answered; not because it is a Question of great Depth or Difficulty to resolve it, but because the true Solution carries Fire in the Tail of it, for it brings with it a Piece of Doctrine which is seldom pleasing to Superiors." By which Expressions, and what he says further in that same Paragraph, 'tis very evident he judged the Decision of this Question belongeth not to the Superior Bishops, Archbishops, or highest Judicatures, but to such as are required by them to obey. *Hales* his Judgment upon this Head is more pointed and express in the penult Leaf of his Letter to Archbishop *Laud*, where he expresseth himself thus, "Quiet and peaceable Men will not fail of their Obedience, no more will I of ought, so be that God and good Conscience command not the contrary. A higher Degree of Duty I do not see how any Man can demand at my Hands; for whereas the Exception of good Conscience sounds not well with many Men, because that many Times under that Form Pertinacy and Wilfulness are suspected to couch itself: In this Case it concerns every Man sincerely to know the Truth of his own Heart, and so accordingly to determine of his own Way, whatsoever the Judgment of his Superiors be, or whatsoever Event befall him." There you have the Mind of that great Man most clearly. Every Man according to him is to determine of his own Way, as he sincerely thinketh in his own Heart is his Duty, not regarding the Judgment of his Superiors; come of him what will, or suffer what he will.

Now, as in Conference with you, I have instanced a great Cloud of Witnesses declaring in favours of *private Judgment*, so in the Judgment of every one of them, this belongs to all whether among Pastors or People to judge and decide for themselves: If this was not so, *private Judgment* could be of no Use to them; and if it was not so, Superiors would be both Judge and Party, and would never condemn themselves. 'Tis a true Saying of the Author of, *The Protestant Resolution*

*solution of Faith*, P. 35. † “No Church, nor all the  
“ Churches in the World, have such Authority, that we  
“ must renounce our Senses, and deny the first Prin-  
“ ciples of Reason, to follow them with a blind and  
“ implicate Faith.” And surely, to talk of a Judgment  
of Discretion belonging to People, and not to allow that  
they should act according to that private Judgment, is to  
enjoin them to be silly Fools, and to act indiscreetly,  
in Opposition to their own Discretion, Judgment and  
Understanding.

But here perhaps it may be objected, That for People  
thus to try and examine, and so to obey or not, as they  
think meet, is to make Inferiours Judges of their Superi-  
ors, which is most absurd. But I answer, This is not  
to make Inferiours Judges of their Superiours; for hereby  
they only make themselves Judges of their own Actions,  
as to what they are to do or not do in Obedience to the  
Sentences of their Superiours, judging in so far only as  
these Sentences concern themselves: Here they do not  
judge for others.

*Tim.* I cannot desire you to tarry longer at this  
Time; but could you allow a Meeting, was it To-mor-  
row, I would gladly wait upon you, having yet sundry  
Queries to put, or favours to ask of you.

Then if you please, you may call *Tuesday* next by  
Two of the Clock Afternoon.

*Tim.* Be it so. Goodnight.

O DIALOGUE

† Collection of Discourses against the Errors of the  
Church of Rome, published 1687, by some of the eminent-  
est of the English Divines, and reprinted at Edinburgh,  
with the Bishop of Edinburgh's Imprimatur.



## DIALOGUE V.

I R E N E U S.

I With a good Evening to you, *Timotheus*.

T I M O T H E U S.

Is it that Time of the Day already?

*Iren.* I have prevented you. It is past Noon. And now I am come to hear what are the Queries you have to put at this Time.

*Tim.* My first Query is, What are your Sentiments of the Act of Parliament 1690, anent the calling of Gospel Ministers? For sundry pretend, that in case there be not a *Presentation*, in that Case this Act is still in Force upon the Church of Scotland.

*Iren.* To be brief with you, my Sentiments are, That since ever the Act for *Patronages* in 1712, that Act is of no Force, nor hath it any binding Obligation upon us; nor was it ever of any Church Authority among us, being only a Civil Law, or Act of the State, this Church having never judged of the Justness nor Unjustness thereof. And that which hath confirmed me and others in this Opinion, namely, that now that Act is of no Force in any Case, is the Consideration of what was openly advanced at the last Assembly by a worthy Gentleman, eminently learned in the Law, (and whom our Government hath judged worthy of the highest Place in the High Court of Session) namely, That now there lyes no Obligation upon any Judicature in this Church from that Act, since the Act restoring Patronages, asserting also that now the only Civil Law for settling Ministers is the Act in favour of Patronages; or, in case of a *jus devolutum*, the Presbytery only have the Right of Election.

Now be pleased to tell me your 2<sup>d</sup> Query.

*Tim.*

*Tim.* It is this, namely, That you would be so kind, as to tell what are your Sentiments anent that Act of Parliament 1690, whether was it made *with the Consent and by the Advice of those worthy Presbyterian Ministers*, who were alive at the *Revolution*, and were lately come out of the Furnace from suffering for Presbyterian Principles, and the Cause of Christ, in the late Times? for this is commonly cast in the Teeth of such as endeavour to show the Unreasonableness of Heretors, not of our Communion, but open Enemies of our Constitution, and also the Unreasonableness of such Heretors their having a Voice with others, as are non-residing, dwelling, may be, some Hundreds of Miles Distance from the Congregation, and are never like to be the Hearers of such a Minister; or when they argue against the Settlement, while there is no Consent of the Congregation where the Candidate is to be placed; I say, in such or the like Cases, it is ordinarily objected to us, that we are very unlike to our old suffering Ministers, by whose Advice that Act was made.

*Iren.* This will take more Time to answer than your former Query. However, 1. To affirm that Act was made with the Consent and by the Advice of those old suffering Presbyterian Ministers, is *gratis dictum*, and has still been denied by others. And that it was not Fact, to me is more than probable from sundry Things: As,

(1) From this, that I could never hear of any Thing offered for Proof thereof, only bare Assertions.

(2.) That this could not be Fact, to me is plain from the Consideration of what is said in that *Address and Petition*, whereof Mr. *Wodrow* gives Account \*, which was drawn up at the Revolution by Ministers and Gentlemen who had been suffering under Prelacy, to be presented to the Prince of *Orange* by many thousand Presbyterians: In which Petition, Article 6th, it is desired, "That Laick Patronages be discharged, as was done in 1649; and the People restored to their

O 2

Right

" Right and Privilege of Election, according to the  
 " Warrant of God's Word." Now, tho' there those  
 Ministers and Gentlemen, and other Thousands of Pres-  
 byterians petition for the People's having their Right  
 restored; yet they have not a Word for Heretors more  
 than for other People: In that Petition they call all  
 such *Intruders* as are settled without the People's  
 Election.

(3.) To me it is clear and evident, those Ministers  
 at the Revolution could not advise to any such Regu-  
 lation, when I consider what is said in the *True Repre-  
 sentation of Presbyterian Government*, a little Piece said  
 to have been published by such Presbyterian Ministers  
 as had been suffering rather than renounce their Princi-  
 ples. It was licensed *April 18, 1690*, published for  
 vindicating the Profession of Presbyterians, 1. By giving  
 a plain Account of what they held, 2. By taking off  
 the most material Objections and Reproaches which  
 were used against them. In that *Representation*, as  
 Patronages are called, "a direct crossing Christ's In-  
 stitution, and a robbing his People of the Privilege  
 he hath bequeathed to them," viz. of chusing their  
 own Pastors; so, when answering an Objection which  
 might be made against giving the People the Choice of  
 their Pastors, namely, "If that were done, then Men  
 of Note and Interest in Parishes may be over-ruled  
 by the Multitude (which often is ignorant and heady)  
 and have Ministers imposed on them;" In Answer  
 to this it is said, "The same Inconveniency was apt to  
 follow on popular Election in other Ages of the  
 Church; and yet in the Apostles Times, and in the  
 first and best Ages, till the seventh or eighth Centu-  
 ry, or later, Patronages were not settled in the  
 Church: They came in among the latest Antichri-  
 stian Corruptions and Usurpations. The primitive  
 Christians were not so tender of their Grandeur and  
 such Privileges as their Rank in the World gave  
 them; nor so little tender of the Liberties of the  
 Church, and the Interest of Christians as such. And  
 if any such Pretensions appeared to be owned by  
 the



" the Grandees of these Times, they met with a se-  
 " vere Check; and that in lesser Matters than acclaim-  
 " ing a Power of chusing Ministers for the whole  
 " Church; as appears by the Apostles removing the  
 " Distinction even in the Seats in their Assemblies,  
 " that was made between the Man with the gold Ring  
 " and gay Clothing, and the Man in vile Clothing."  
 " We are content (*says that Representation*) to allow  
 " great Men all due Respect, but not to compliment  
 " them with what is Christ's Legacy to his People;  
 " and therefore we hope that they who are willing to  
 " subject themselves to the Laws of Christ, will be  
 " content to stand on equal Ground with their poor  
 " Brethren in the Church with respect to Church Pri-  
 " vileges, which belong not to Men as poor or rich, as  
 " great or small, but as they are Christ's Disciples;  
 " tho' we are far from the levelling Principle in other  
 " Things." The above Citation makes it clear to a  
 Demonstration, those Ministers could never advise to  
 make any such Regulation as that of the Parliament's  
 1690, anent the Election of Pastors.

(4.) To me this is evident, when I consider the Wri-  
 tings of some of those Ministers published since the Re-  
 volution, as *Principal Rule*, a worthy Member in our  
 first Assembly after the Revolution, and who was sent  
 by that Assembly, with the Reverend Mr. *Blair*, to wait  
 on his Majesty King *William* anent the Affairs of this  
 Church; appointed also, as told already, by that Assem-  
 bly, to write in her Vindication, in Answer to some  
 Pamphlets published against the Church of *Scotland* at  
 that Time; he suffered by being sent to the *Bass*, and  
 after his Release was banished his native Land for preach-  
 ing at a Conventicle and baptizing Children: And if  
 any among our Ministers had been consulted about that  
 Act, I dare say he had been one of them. He in his  
*Rational Defence of Nonconformity*, published 1689,  
 asserts, \* " That the People, and neither the Patron nor  
 " any other, by the Laws of the Gospel, have the Right  
 " of Election of their Pastors." There also, in answer

to

to his Opposite, who in arguing against the People's Right in this Affair had used some bitter Sarcasm, because of their alledged Insufficiency to judge of Ministers Qualifications, he says, " Our Lord doth not speak " with such Contempt of the People as this learned " Doctor doth, he saith, *My Sheep hear my Voice, and* " *they know not the Voice of Strangers*, John x. 27. " and adds he, To deny this Spirit of Discerning to " the People of God, is to make them Sheep in a literal " Sense, that Men may rule over them as Beasts." And having argued for the People's Right from the Topick of Reason, he says, ‡ " We do not lay the Stress of the " Matter upon human Reason, but on Gospel Institu- " tion : I affirm then, adds he, that this is the Institu- " tion of Christ, that it is the Order that he hath ap- " pointed in the Gospel, that People should have Li- " berty to choose their own Pastors, and other Church " Officers." Still he speaks of the *People's Right* to elect, but without the least *Innuendo* of Heritors having any more Right or Power than others in that Matter.

So the Reverend Mr. *John Park* Minister at *Stran-rawer*, a Sufferer for Presbyterian Principles; Mr. *Wadrow* gives him the Character of being a worthy Man of great Solidity, and very sufficient Learning : In his Treatise on *Patronages*, a Book which was very much esteemed by all the Ministers of this Church when it was first published in 1689, he asserts, † " The poorest and " meanest Christian hath as good a Right to this Privi- " lege of calling Gospel Ministers as the richest Patron." And surely, by the Divine Law, a Patron, as a Patron, has as good a Right to this Privilege as any Heritor *qua* Heritor can have, this being a spiritual Ecclesiastical Privilege. And he was of Opinion, That the Usurpation of Patronages and violent Intrusions is a crying Sin, for which God had been provoked in his Justice to lay waste and desolate many of the great Families of the Land.

I see not how any Man, exercising Reason, can imagine those Ministers could advise to give Heritors not

of our Communion, and non-residing Heritors, who in all Probability are never to be the Pastor's Hearers, an equal Voice with the Parishoners in the Election of Ministers; for sometimes those, if not alone, yet with a very small Number of the residing Heritors or Elders, may carry the Election against the rest of the Heritors and Elders, to their Discontent, and to the Grief of the whole Congregation: A highly reasonable Regulation, that those who are not of our Communion, but of the Episcopal Perswasion, and may be of *Dodwell's* Principles, looking on Presbyterian Ministers, as Men having no more Authority to preach the Gospel than any Herd had, for want of Episcopal Ordination; denying also that Presbyterians have immortal Souls for want of Episcopal Baptism: Surely such are *malignant* to our Presbyterian Constitution; and the General Assembly 1649, by their Directory did declare, That such as were *disaffected and malignant* should have no Vote in the Election of a Minister. Who can imagine our old Sufferers could advise to any Thing like this?

I suppose all Heritors and others of the Episcopal Perswasion, would think it highly unreasonable, any of Presbyterian Principles, that were never in all Appearance to be a Hearer in their Congregations, should have an equal Share with themselves in the Choice of their Pastors; so no more ought they with us. Christ's Command of *doing as we would others should do unto us*, ought to be regarded; and as such would evidence themselves to be Men of Conscience, Principle, Honour, Honesty, Truth and Veracity, they would guard against subscribing any Call to a Presbyterian Minister, engaging to subject themselves to his Ministry, while they never intend it: So to do is contrary to all moral Honesty; yet I acknowledge the Consent of such Heritors is desirable, where the Vote of such is not brought in to cast a Balance, nor to help to bring in a Pastor over the Belly of a People.

I doubt not but that Act of Parliament being once made, those old Ministers alive at the Revolution acquiesced in it, or made no Opposition to it; judging  
that



that thereby the People's Right was in a good Measure preserved, because by it the People had a fair *Negative* over Heritors and Elders, at least if Church-Judicatures pleased, because their *Reasons* for not approving of the Person nominate and proposed by Heritors and Elders, were to be judged of by the Presbytery. And for a good Time, or many Years after making that Act, there was no violent Settlement made to please any, in Opposition to the People's Inclinations : Hence at that Time we hear of no Complaints made against the Church upon the account of Intrusions, neither by People in the Church, nor by such as separated from her at that Time. This of no violent Settlements then, is clear to me from a little Piece published by the *Commission* 1698, intituled, *A seasonable Admonition and Exhortation to some who separate themselves from the Church of Scotland*. In that Piece, the Commission having advanced Arguments against Separation, they came to answer the Exceptions of such as did then separate themselves ; where they answer to their Complaints, of some Ministers, That they were *light and frothy in their Conversation* ; they complained also of their *not exercising Discipline, or but partially* ; also that *insufficient Ministers and scandalous Elders were admitted* ; that *Presbylates were not excommunicated* ; that *promiscuous Communion were kept* ; that *some Ministers were not faithful in reproofing Sin* ; that on *Fast Days gross Abominations were past over in Silence, as the Hearing of the Curates, accepting the Indulgence and Toleration, &c.* But there is not the least Complaint of their intruding any one Minister upon the People against their Will ; and, had there been any such, those People who separated themselves would not forgotten to have made Clamour about it, seeing we see how particular they have been in complaining of what they thought amiss in the Church of *Scotland* at that Day.

Had Presbyteries held on in guarding against settling Ministers over the Belly of the People, I dare say there had never been such Complaints against that Act, nor against Church Judicatures. But when Ministers and  
 People

People saw that, to strengthen a Party, the People were like to be robbed of all Right and Privilege in the Choice of Pastors, they judged it high Time to appear in Vindication of the People's Right to elect their Pastors; a Privilege which they think is plainly contained in the Word of God, asserted in our Books of Discipline, and Acts of Assemblies, and also sworn to in the *National Covenant*; a Privilege which the Light of Nature, or sound Reason, as well as Revelation teacheth to be their Right.

'Tis loudly talk'd by many, that now the People are so fond of this Power, that nothing less can satisfy them, than that the meanest of them shall have their decisive Voice with the greatest of Heritors or Elders in the Congregation; yet if I be not far mistaken, whatever be their Right in the Affair of Election, was that Regulation to be observed, which was fixed upon by the General Assembly 1578, when the second Book of Discipline was approven, which gave the Election to the Eldership with the Congregation's Consent; or was the Directory of the General Assembly 1649, which was to the same Purpose; or was but such an Act made as this, that *Heritors of our Communion* and residing in the Parish, who are to be the Minister's Hearers, subjecting themselves to his Ministry *in the Lord*, should with the Elders of the Congregation have the Election of the Minister, leaving it to the rest of the People of the Parish to approve or disapprove of the Candidate chosen; and in case they disapprove, to give in their Reasons to the Presbytery of the Bounds to judge of them. Presbyteries acting according to *Presbyterian Principles*, guarding against settling the Man chosen, in Opposition to the Congregation, whether they shall prove him guilty of Error or Immorality or not, I say, if any of those was to be made the Rule in the Election of Ministers, I dare say this would satisfy them: Or if no better could be obtained than the Act 1690, was Presbyteries but to act as did the Church of *Scotland* for many Years after the Revolution, guarding against thrusting in the Man nominate and proposed by the Heritors and Elders, whether the

People could prove him guilty of Error or Immorality or not, whatever more is the People's Right, I'm apt to think, that yet in our present Situation this would satisfy. People should mind, that sometimes we are to be content with less than our Due, as did our worthy tender Ancestors many Times formerly. 'Tis the thrusting in of Pastors over the Belly of Christian Congregations, and in Opposition to their declared Inclinations, which ruineth the Peace of this Church, making so many to separate from her, going into the Secession.

And as to the Practice of requiring the People to libel the Candidate, and prove him guilty of Error or Immorality, if they cannot approve of the Heritors and Elders Nomination, as there is nothing in the Act 1690 requiring this; so I cannot think our worthy Patriots in Parliament at that Time ever designed it, or if they did intend, they should thus libel the Candidate nominated, I'm certain they left no more Power or Privilege to the People of the Congregation, than to the Man living at *John of Grot's House*; for if he will come to a Presbytery, and offer to prove the Candidate guilty of Error or Immorality under the Penalty of due Censure, I suppose it would stop the Ordination, as well as if this was done by the Congregation.

Such an *Act* of Assembly as that Decree of the once famous reformed Church of *France* would be desirable, and if observed might be a blessed Mean of healing our lamentable Divisions: For treating of the *Election* and *Ordination* of Ministers, that Church says, † “ But in  
 “ case Contention shall arise, and the afore-named Elect  
 “ be pleasing to the Consistory (*that is the Presbytery*)  
 “ but not unto the People, or to the major Part of them,  
 “ his Reception shall be deferred, and the whole shall  
 “ be remitted unto the Colloquy, or provincial Synod  
 “ which shall take Cognisance both of the Justification  
 “ of the before-named elect Minister, and of his Reception: And altho' the said Elect should be then and  
 “ there

† Quick's Synod. Chap. I. Canon 6th of their Discipline.



" there justified, yet shall he not be given as Pastor unto  
 " that People against their Will, nor to the Discon-  
 " tentment of the greatest Part of them; nor shall the  
 " Pastor be imposed against his Will upon that Church,  
 " and the Difference shall be terminated by Order as  
 " above." This was an Act, Decree or Regulation most  
 agreeable to *Presbyterian Principles*.

*Tim.* You have said enough to stop the Mouths of  
 such as would have our old suffering Ministers who were  
 alive at the Revolution, to have advised and consented  
 to the making the Act of Parliament 1690, anent the  
 electing of Ministers, as also to vindicate them from  
 being in the least for any violent Settlement, But I  
 have a

3<sup>d</sup> Request to make, and it is this, I am of Opinion  
 that by the sacred Scriptures the People have a Right  
 to chuse their own Guides and Pastors, yet I am often  
 diffculted how to form the Argument from such Scrip-  
 tures as are pleaded for their Right, tho' I know them,  
 and therefore I earnestly ask your Help and Assistance  
 in this Matter; Now this seems to be the more needful,  
 that I have a frequent Occasion to converse with sundry,  
 who say they cannot see a Scripture to prove that  
 Point.

*Iren.* For Answer, 1<sup>st</sup>, I would have you consider,  
 That by the People here as sometime formerly I told you,  
 I mean the Nobility, Barons, Gentry, Magistrates, Mini-  
 sters in collegiate Charges, Feuers, Elders, Deacons and  
 People of lower Station being of our Communion, ha-  
 ving their Residence in the vacant Congregation. 2. You  
 would consider, we do not assert the People's Right is  
*Πρωτος*, or so plainly expressed in Scripture, as every one  
 that looks into the Scripture may see it at first View:  
 No, yet we maintain 'tis plainly to be found in the  
 Scriptures of Truth, being clearly deduceable from them:  
 And Scripture Consequences are Scripture, as is asserted  
 by orthodox Divines against *Arians*, *Socinians*, &c. But  
 3. As my Circumstances do not allow, so albeit, I had  
 never so much Time, I think it needless to enlarge upon  
 that Head, considering what hath been written formerly

and of late by sundry upon that Subject, which hath never been sufficiently answered by any: And for answer, I might send you to their Writings; but in case you have not those at Hand, I shall instance two or three of those Scripture Arguments.

And the 1st Scripture I mention is, *Acts i. 15.* and downwards, where we read of the Election of *Matthias* to be an Apostle: The Disciples of our Lord being gathered together, to the Number of an Hundred and Twenty, the Apostle *Peter* stood in the Midst and told them, it was needful that one should be chosen to fill up the Room of *Judas*, taking Part in the Ministry with the other Apostles, who was to be a Witness with them of the Resurrection of our Lord: And they, viz. the Hundred and Twenty appointed or made Choice of two, viz. *Barsabas* and *Matthias*; and when they had prayed to the Omniscient Heart-searching Lord, that he would shew which of those two, whom they had appointed, was the Person whom he had chosen or thought meetest for the Office of an Apostle, then they gave forth their Lots, and the Lot fell upon *Matthias*, upon which he was numbred with the Eleven Apostles. *Matthias* being to be an extraordinary Office-bearer in the House of God, it was extraordinary in his Election, that it was referred by Lot to God's immediate Decision, whether he or *Barsabas* should be the Person; yet as he was to be an Officer in the Church of Christ, so he had the Choice and Consent of his Church, that this Election might be a Precedent in future Ages.

Now, this is the first New Testament Instance of the Choice of an Office-bearer in the Church of Christ, wherein Men were concerned, and therefore we may rationally conclude, that surely it was designed of the Lord for a Rule and Precedent to his Church in all Time coming: And had it not been designed as a Precedent, we may justly conclude the Sovereign King of *Zion* had undoubtedly called *Matthias* immediately by himself to be an Apostle, as he did his other Apostles, which had been fully as easy as was the sending *Peter* with a Message to the one Hundred and Twenty to elect two, that one

one of them might be chosen by Lot. The learned Mr. *Lauder* in his *ancient Bishops considered*, says, " *Matthias* was without Doubt elected by the People; " God hath lodged the Right of Elections in the People; " and therefore their Bishops and Pastors should be nominated and elected by the Body of the People. In " the Election of *Matthias*, the People did all that could " be done by Men in the Affair, they elected two, and " did not nominate the individual Person, not because " they were not the Source of Elections, but because " the Person to be elected was to be put into the Apostolical Office, and it was requisite that an Apostle " should be elected in an extraordinary Way, and in " some Sort immediately by Jesus Christ, as Mr. *Claud* " observed." And he says further, " The People's " electing of *Matthias* and *Barsabas*, one of which was " to be an Apostle, was more than to elect Ten Bishops, " to have a Power to elect two that one of them " may be an Admiral, is more than to have a Power to " elect Ten Captains of *Frigats*." And from what he says in that Book, which was published 1707, you may see the People's Right to elect their own Pastors is no new Doctrine in the Church of *Scotland*; and there, P. 375. he asserts, " The meanest Tradesman belongs " to the peculiar People, the Royal Priesthood, are " Kings and Priests to God, and to Christ, have as full " a Right to sit down at the Table of the Lord, and " to demand Baptism to their Children as the greatest " Princes or Nobles, and therefore have as good a Right " as they to give their Voices in the Election of Bishops." Mr. *Lauder* was never esteemed a Person of any wild Principles, or of a divisive Spirit, far from it: *Calderwood* in his *Altare Damascenum* asserted to the same Purpose, affirming that *Agricolæ* Plowmen, and others of meaner Station, have as good a Right to this Privilege as *ipse dominus villæ*, or the Laird of the Land.

*Tim.* When first I read that Scripture, namely *Acts* i. from the 15. v. I did not see the Force of that Argument



ment, but now I see where it lieth, be pleased therefore to adduce another Scripture Argument.

*Iren.* A 2d Scripture Argument proving the People's Right in the Affair, is *Acts* vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. where we read of the Apostles calling the Multitude of Disciples to them, and exhorting them to look out among them *Seven Men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom they might appoint over that Business,* viz. of taking Care of the Poor, collecting for them, and seeing to the Distribution of the Church's Charity. And as the Command was *pleasing to the whole of the Disciples*, or of the Lord's People, for that was the Name whereby they were then called; so now the Choice being wholly left to them, as that which of Right from Christ belonged unto them; they therefore elected the Seven, and set them before the Apostles to be ordained by them. The Disciples or the Lord's People had Right from Christ to chuse their Deacons; therefore say our Protestant Divines *a fortiori*, much more have they a Right from Christ to chuse their own Pastors, to whom they are to commit the Charge of their Souls. Judicious *Durham* calls this Scripture *a clear Evidence of a People's Interest in their calling of a Minister.* The learned *Grotius* argues to the same Purpose, from *Acts* vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. when commenting upon *Acts* xiv. 23, So that eminent Divine *Dr. Owen* affirms, \* "It is impossible there should be a more convincing Instance and Example of the free Choice of ecclesiastical Officers, by the Multitude or Fraternity of the Church, than is given us herein; nor was there any Ground or Reason why this Order and Process should be observed, why the Apostles themselves would not nominate and appoint Persons whom they saw and knew meet for this Office to receive it, but that it was the Right and Liberty of the People, according to the Mind of Christ, to chuse their own Officers, which they would not abridge nor infringe."

*Tim.* I see the Argument to be of Force, for if People have a Right from Christ to chuse their Deacons to dispose

\* Nat. & Govern. P. 60.

dispose of their Charity, much more may we conclude they have a Right from Christ to chuse the Overseers of their precious Souls. If a Man has a Right to chuse a Servant, a Lawyer, a Tradesman, much more to chuse a Wife, because his Interest and Felicity depends much more upon the right Election of a Wife, than of a Servant, or any else. But let me hear another Scripture Argument.

*Iren.* A 3d Scripture-Argument for proving the People's Right, is taken from *Acts* xiv. 23. where our Translators render that Verse thus; *And when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, &c.* I own, according to this Translation, there is not a Shadow of Argument for the People's Right in the Affair; but then our Translation of that Verse, 'tis an unjust Translation of that Scripture: The Words according to the Original are; *χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ ἐκκλησίαν,* The Argument is from these Words in the first Part of the Verse, which in all our old *English* Translations were rendred, *When they had ordained them Elders by Election in every Church.* By Election, to wit of the People of those Churches over whom the Apostles ordained them Elders or Presbyters, that is, Ministers. And as I once told you before, it was not the Fault of our Translators the Words were not so still; for tho' those learned Men were mostly of *Prelatick* Principles, that were chosen by King *James VI.* for that glorious Work of translating the Scriptures, yet they were Men of Honour and Integrity, translating these Words according to the Original; but they were altered afterwards. Dr. *Thomas Hill* Master of Trinity-College in *Cambridge*, and a Member of the *Westminster* Assembly, in a Sermon of his preached *April 3. 1648*, before the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, Aldermen, and common Council of *London*, tells us, "He had it from certain Hands, such, says he, as lived in those Times, That when the Bible had been translated by the Translators appointed, the New Testament was looked over by some of the great Prelates (Men I could name of their Persons) to bring it to speak *Prelatick* Language, and

“ and they did alter 14 Places of the New Testament, to make them speak the Language of the Church of “ *England*.” And then he instanceth four Places of this Book of the *Acts*, whereof this Text is one, which, says he, in the *Geneva Translation* was rendred, *chosen by Suffrages, by lifting up of Hands*, the Word primarily importing that.

The learned *Beza* renders the Words thus; *Quamque ipsis per suffragia creassent per singulas ecclesias presbyteros*, when they had ordained them Elders in every Church by Suffrages. And as *Beza*, so the *Tigurine Version*, so *Pagnin*, so *Flaccus Illyricus*, *Vatablus*, *Erasmus*, *Piscator*, and many others, thus render the Words: And *Amesius* says, *Bellarmino* himself owns, that this is *the only proper and native Signification of the Word*. The Word, to wit, *χειροτονια* is taken from the ancient Custom of the *Grecians*, who, in their Election of Magistrates, used to give their Suffrages by stretching out their Hands, which is the proper Signification of the Word.

It hath been observed and affirmed by many of our most eminent Divines, That no Instance can be given, out of any sacred or profane Author, of this *Greek* Word its being taken in another Sense, before or at the Time in which the Evangelist *Luke* wrote the *Acts* of the Apostles, than for *ordaining* or *electing* by Suffrages. As *Calderwood*, who, in his *Altare Damascenum*, says, † “ It is not credible the Evangelist *Luke* would have affixed a new Signification to the Word, *qua ante eum Græci autores nunquam usi sunt*, which had never been used by *Greek* Authors before him. So Mr. *Gillespie* ‡, and Mr. *Oliver Bowles* \*; so *Cartwright* on the *Rhemist's Translation* of the New Testament, upon this Text, *viz. Acts xiv. 23.* says, “ It is absurd to “ imagine, the Holy Ghost by *Luke*, speaking with the “ Tongues of Men, that is to say, to their Understand- “ ing, should use a Word in that Signification, in which “ it was never used before his Time by any Writer, ho- “ ly

† Page 329. ‡ Electing of Pastors, Page 11.

\* Palt. Evan. Page 12.



“ly or prophane : For how could he then be understood, if using the Note and Name they used, he should have fled from the Signification whereunto they used it? Unless therefore his Purpose was to write that which none should read, it must needs be that as he wrote, so he meant the Election by Voices.” And a good deal more he hath to this Purpose, affirming the *Greek Scholiast* also, and *Ignatius*, do plainly refer this Word to the Choice of the Church by Voices.

This and the two former Arguments are illustrated and confirmed at great Length, and all the Objections or Exceptions, which have been started by the Popish Cardinal *Bellarmino*, or others, against them, are largely answered in *Jus populi divinum*, from Page 38 to Page 44; and in the *Full Vindication of the People's Right to elect their own Pastors*, from Page 63 to Page 80; and in Mr. *Hill's Latin Dissertation* upon this Text, *Acts* xiv. 23, published 1732. Sundry other Scriptures are adduced for Proof of this of the People's Right, which here I shall not mention: For if but one plain Scripture can be instanced, the Argument is valid.

*Tim.* Before you leave that third Argument, there is one Objection against it, which the Enemies of the People's Right reckon very material; affirming that the Word *χειροτονιαυτες* is not always to be understood of Election by Suffrages; for sometimes, say they, we read in Scripture, that the Word *χειροτονω* is attributed to God, as *Acts* x. 41, where the inspired Historian *Luke*, speaking of Christ, says, *Him God raised up the third Day, and shewed him openly, not to all the People, but unto Witnesses chosen before of God, αρεται χειροτονμητοις*: There, say they, he is speaking of the Apostles, who were chosen immediately by Jesus Christ, without the Suffrages of any Person whatsoever.

*Iren.* There was a Reply made to this Objection in the Places above-mentioned. But now, for further Answer,

1. As the Word *χειροτονω* is commonly rendred to elect or chuse by Suffrages, as has been shown; so even the Popish Cardinal *Bellarmino*, who more than an hundred Years ago started this Objection, he owns

this is the proper and native Signification of the Word, as who can but own it is? And if so, then no solid Reason can be given, why this Signification of the Word should be departed from; for there is nothing in this Sense which is contrary to the Text or Context, or to any other Scripture; nor to Truth, or to the Analogy of Faith, or sound Reason. If we may depart from the proper Signification of the Words of Scripture, when it contradicts our *Hypothesis* or Principles, and doth not suit with our Humour, we will make the Scripture *a Nose of Wax*. But I suppose it is agreed among sound Interpreters, that we are not to depart from the proper, native or natural Signification of a Word in Scripture, but in such Cases as has been instanced; and this alone is a sufficient Answer to the Objection. Some have affirmed, That the Word *χρηστωρια* hath sometimes been taken by learned Authors in an improper Sense, and not for Election by Voices, or stretching out of the Hand. But though that could be proven, that even before *Luke* wrote the *Acts* of the *Apostles* the Word was sometimes taken in an improper Sense, which is denied by the Learned, as by *Cartwright*, *Calderwood*, and others; yet that will never prove, that the Word is to be taken in an improper Sense here; for though a Word should have been taken in an improper Sense at a Time by some Author, that will not say, it is never more to be taken in a proper native Sense: And if with many of Episcopal Principles, the Practice of the primitive Church is the best Commentary upon such Scriptures, then it is owned almost by all, that during, at least, the first three Centuries after Christ, the Church or People universally chused her own Pastors.

2. The Word *Acts* x. 41. is not the same with the Word *Acts* xiv. 23. The Word in that first Scripture is *πρεσβυτεριον*, and the Word in the last Scripture is *χρηστωρια*. The first Word is observed to be, as it were, the preventing of a *χρηστωρια*, intimating a prior Designation by God himself, who doth all Things according to the Counsel of his holy sovereign Will.

Com-

Compound Words, though from the same *Radix* or Root, are often of very different Signification.

But, 3. Here we might answer with the learned Mr. Gillespie, in his Dissertation anent *the Election of Pastors with the People's Consent*, where he says, "The Word *παραχειροτονια*, *Acts* x. 41. is there attributed to God *μεταφορικῶς*, That in the Council of God the Apostles were in a Manner elected by Voices of the Trinity, as *faciamus hominem*, *Gen.* i. and hindreth no more the proper Signification of the Word, applied to Men, than *μεταμελεια*, ascribed to God, can prove that there is no Change in Men when they repent, because there is no Change in God."

But, 4. If there, to wit *Acts* xiv. 23. we shall pass from the proper and native Signification of the Word *χειροτονήσαντες*, to elect by Suffrages, then, as hinted formerly, we make the inspired Historian *Luke*, in his Writing, to have used Words which none in his Day could have understood; in regard the Word *χειροτονειν* had never been used in any Author, sacred or profane, formerly, but for ordaining or electing by Suffrages, with stretching out the Hand. Here I might have told you how the Word is taken to this Purpose in the learned *Pasor's Lexicon Græco-Latinum*, so by *Schrevelius* in his *Lexicon*, and also by the learned *Robison* in his *Lexicon*; so by the most learned *Philologists* and *Criticks*, as *Suicerus* in his *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus e patribus Græcis*, published 1689, where he tells us, that *το χειροτονειν*, in its first and proper Signification, denotes to elect by Suffrages, with stretching forth of the Hand; so *Balsamon*, *Zonaras*, and others.

*Tim.* Though some deny the Scripture gives any Direction in the Affair of chusing Pastors; yet I think you have clearly proven from Scripture, the People have such a Divine Right, founded on the Word of God.

But there is another Argument pleaded by some, which to me seems also to be of great Weight; I would therefore have your Judgment of it; and it is this, namely, *If the Scripture gives no Direction in this Matter, then it follows Christ our sovereign Lawgiver, the Apostle and high Priest of our Profession,*



*hath not been so faithful to him that appointed him as was Moses in all his House, Heb. iii. 1, 2.*

*Iren.* I mind that Argument, and to me it is strong. The Author of *Jus populi divinum* argues to that Purpose, laying it down in his first Proposition upon that Subject of the People's Right, where at your Leisure you may see it at some Length.

*Tim.* Might it please you, not having that Book at present, it would be a Favour to narrate what is said there upon the Argument.

*Iren.* At your Desire I shall do it: And there, Page 3d, he says, "The calling of Gospel Ministers being a Matter of great Moment to the Churches of Christ, he, who is faithful in all his House, hath undoubtedly appointed who shall be the Callers, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works. If Christ hath not determined this in his Word, let us never talk more of the Perfection of the Scriptures; let us never assert more, that they contain exact Rules for the Churches of God in all Ages; let us never argue more against the Necessity of human Traditions." The Reverend Mr. Park, whom Mr. Wodrow characterizeth for a Person of great Solidity, and very sufficient Learning, says, *The arrogating such a Privilege (to wit, as this of calling Gospel Ministers) without Warrant from the Word of God, is most derogatory unto, and an high and injurious Reflection upon, the infinite Love, Wisdom and Faithfulness of our blessed Lord, and directly implies, that he hath not sufficiently provided his Church with a complete Method for furnishing and Election of her own Office-bearers, without calling in the weak and superstitious Devices of Men's Invention, to her Assistance.* And adds he, *such as dare to rectify his Institutions as defective, or to call in question our Lord's Wisdom and Faithfulness in this, may go a great Length to question his Ability to save to the uttermost.*  
And

And says he, *there is a nearer and firmer Connection between these, than every one thinks.* And the Author of *jus populi* having cited for Authorities that worthy Gentleman, the Laird of *Bennockie*, in his *Funeral of Prelacy*, the London Ministers, in their *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, and also in their *Vindication of the Presbyterian Government*; he says, "Is it not the Doctrine of the Church of Scotland, to which all her Officers are engaged, That the whole Counsel of God, concerning all Things necessary for his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or, by good and necessary Consequences, may be deduced from Scripture? Now, the Glory of God, the Salvation of Souls, the Faith and Life of the Lord's People, I humbly think, are all concerned, and nearly concerned, in the Calling of Gospel Ministers; and therefore the Scripture is to be our Rule in this: For who shall be the Callers, is not a bare Circumstance of Time or Place, 'tis none of those natural and civil Circumstances, without which Actions are not performable, and must be ordered by the Light of Nature and human Prudence, according to the General Rules of the Word, admitting of Variation." And having cited, *The full Vindication of the Commissions Overtures, English Presbytery, Presbyterian Government described by Britannus Philo-presbyter, The Pastor and Prelate, and Presbyterian Government as now established in the Church of Scotland*, all speaking much to that Purpose; he says, "Are not the Scriptures written, to make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Work? Are they not sufficient to teach him how to behave himself in the House of God, which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth? If he know not where the Power of calling Gospel Ministers is lodged by the Head of the Church, the King of Zion, then he knows not, in all the World, how to carry in the House of God, in ordaining or admitting such as are to be Office-bearers in Christ's House. Will not his Conscience be on the Rack, when he knows not whether

whether it be Duty to concur with the People's Call, the Elders Call, the Heretors Call, the Patron's Call, the Magistrates Call, the Town-Council's Call, the Presbytery's Call? If the Scriptures give no Direction in this Affair, let us never more complain of Patronages as unscriptural, or antiscriptural; and let our noble Reformers, and other Worthies, that have pleaded strenuously from Scripture for the People's Right, and against Patronages, pass for a Company of weak, though well-meaning Men, that did not understand the Scriptures. To say the Scriptures give no Direction in the Affair, is to make them a Rule defective, and ineffectual to the End for which they were written by the Holy Ghost. If a System of Laws were drawn up for the Government of a Kingdom, a Commonwealth, or Royal Burgh, in which it was declared, such and such Office-bearers were needful, and to be chosen from Time to Time, and yet contain nothing as to the Electors, whether the People themselves or Foreigners, whether their Friends or Foes, whether by many or only a few, whether by all or only some selected Persons; surely that System could not be reckoned perfect or complete. And so it is in this Case. Is it not to the Law and Testimony that we are to have our Recourse for Direction, how to behave in the House of God? And as *pudet legisperito absque lege*, so here *pudet theologo absque scriptura loqui*. Is it not the Protestant Doctrine, that the Scriptures are the supreme Judge of Controversy? And hath it not been a Controversy between Papists and Protestants, for a long Time, whether the People have Right to choose their own Pastors, or not? Well, how shall it be decided, but by opening the Book of God, and submitting to its Determination? Such as think the People have no Right to choose their own Pastors, will do well to inform those that are otherwise perswaded, shewing from Scripture where the King of Zion hath lodged this Right; for as Mr. Park says, *the clearest and safest Methods, in Debates of this Nature, which concern the Interest* of



of Christ and his Church, is to decide them by the Sentence of the Scriptures. " Either it is a Matter of Moonshine who be the Callers; and so there was never Ground to complain of, declare, address, or write and print against Patronages, as the Church of Scotland hath done: Or the Scriptures are imperfect, if they determine not who are the Callers: Or will it be said, they are perfect, but so obscure, that neither Presbytery, Synod, Commission, nor Assembly, can tell what to make of them in that Affair?"

*Tim.* It was in *Jus populi divinum* I saw this Argument; and though I read *The modest and humble Enquiry*, which pretends to answer it, reading it carefully, I do not remember that Author gives any the least Answer to this Argument.

*Iren.* It seems he thought it unanswerable, and therefore he judged it safest to put his Thumb upon it.

What well regulated or rightly constituted Society upon Earth, but hath some determined Rules for electing the Overseers of the Society? Was the Christian Church formed into a Society by Christ the Wisdom of God? and hath he given no Direction as to the Electors of the Overseers of this Society; whether they shall be Friends or Foes; whether by such as are of the Communion of this Society, or such as could wish to see it swallowed up, and utterly destroyed, whether by themselves or Foreigners; whether with or against the Mind of the Society? The Reverend Mr. Gillespie, speaking of Christ's Faithfulness, expresseth himself much to the same Purpose, in his *Dispute against the English Ceremonies*, Page 132.

*Tim.* If you please, let me know what you could answer to that trite and common Objection against the People's having any Right in this Affair, which is taken from the Consideration of the People's being ignorant and unfit to judge of a Minister's Qualifications for the Work of the Gospel, and therefore ought not to be regarded in this Matter.

*Iren.* I cannot stand to answer that Objection at any Length, nor is it needful, considering what a large Answer

Answer you may see to this in *Jus populi divinum*, from Page 115-----121, only I may say, it is a Kin to the Objection of the chief Priests and Pharisees against them that followed our Lord, when they said, *this People that know not the Law are cursed* \*: The Objection is a *shaming the Counsel of the Poor*, which is condemned by the Psalmist, speaking by the Spirit of God †. Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World rich in Faith, while rich Men blaspheme the worthy Name of Christ, *Jam. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* It was a true Saying of Bishop Hall, "The deepest Philosopher that ever was, saving the Reverence of the Schools, is but an ignorant Sot to the simplest Christian ‡:" And many Times simple serious Christians have been much fitter to chuse Ministers, having more Right from Christ than eminently learned Bishops and Ministers themselves: As in the Days of *Athanasius*, when the People adhered to the orthodox Doctrine and the Profession of it, when almost all the Bishops and Clergy were become *Arians*, many of the People in *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*, *Antioch*, and sundry other Places, when persecuted by their own Bishops, to their high Commendation, they kept private Fellowship Meetings for worshipping God in those Places; I think a mean Country-Man like *William Thorp* was fitter to chuse a Minister, than *Arundell* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, who said to him, he ought not to suppose a Prelate would command an unlawful Thing;---but if it were unlawful, yet he obeying him should not answer before God; *William* chused rather to suffer than obey him.

*Tim.* There is another common Objection against allowing the People any Vote or Concern in the Election of their Minister, namely, The scandalous Tumults and Confusion which that might occasion, and which sometimes they have actually occasioned at such Elections.

*Iren.* You may see a large Answer to that Objection in *Jus populi divinum* from P. 99----107, only I add, that

\* John 7. 49.

† Psal. 14. 6.

‡ Medit. and Vows, P. 34.

that if this Argument prove any Thing, it proves too much, as it is enough to prove, that Heretors or Gentlemen should not be allowed any Vote; for sometimes we have heard of drawing their Swords to one another at Elections: Yea, it would follow, that Ministers should not be allowed to meet in Church Judicatures; for sometimes there has been much Confusion in Presbyteries, in Synods, in General Assemblies, yea and in Councils.

*Tim.* Can you instance any such Tumults or Disorders in Councils?

*Iren.* Yes, as in that Council which met about the Doctrine of *Eutyches* at *Ephesus* in 449, consisting of 149 Bishops: There *Eusebius*, on requiring *Eutyches* to acknowledge two Natures to be in Christ, for this it is said, "The same Tumult and Uproar was made in that Council that had been raised in a former Council against *Eutyches* for refusing to own them; nay, in Part by the same Prelates, let *Eusebius* be burnt alive, they all cried out with one Voice, Let him be cut asunder; as he divides, so let him be divided."—And there, *lifting up their Hands*, it is said, They joined as one Man in crying out aloud, Whoever admits of two Natures, let him be anathematized, let him be driven out, torn in Pieces, massacred." In this Council *Flavianus* Bishop of *Constantinople*, at hearing the Sentence read, which was in favours of *Eutyches*, excepted against *Dioscorus* (who did preside in that Council) which so provoked that haughty Prelate, "that he, and others of his Party, falling upon him in a Transport of Passion, first beat him in a most barbarous Manner, and as it were in Emulation of one another; and then, throwing him on the Ground, trampled upon him till he was ready to expire, and did expire two or Three Days after, of the Bruises he had received in that Council."

*Tim.* That was a strange Piece of Madness in Clergymen in a Church Judicatory; where is it to be seen?

*Iren.* If you have the least Jealousy of the Matter of Fact, you may see it in the learned *Bower's* late History of the Popes or Bishops of *Rome*, Vol. II. Page



43, &c. where you have this and a much larger Account of the Confusions, Tyranny and Wickedness of that Council; and how all the 149 Bishops at this Council, except Pope Leo his two Legates, *Eusebius* of *Dorilæum* and *Flavianus*, they all, out of Fears of *Dioscorus*, and the military Force which attended at that Council, signed a blank Paper in favour of the Doctrine of *Eutyches*. Here was a Demonstration of the small Regard that is due to the Decisions, Decrees, Determinations and Injunctions of superior or supreme Church Judicatures many Times; for not long before this, in a Council at *Constantinople*, the Bishops, and some of them who were Members at this Council, had appeared with great seeming Zeal against the Doctrine of *Eutyches*, which was there condemned, though now they are zealous to Madness for it.

Some have talked as if it were but a small Matter who shall have the Choice of our Pastors, a Thing about which we need not much trouble our Heads: But yet "I look on the calling of Gospel Ministers to be  
 " not a Question *de lana caprina*, not a trivial indiffe-  
 " rent Business; but a Matter of vast Moment, as *Cal-*  
 " *derwood* avers; a Point on which the Success of the  
 " Gospel doth not a little depend, as Mr. *Gillespie*  
 " hints; a capital Point, as Mr. *Lauder* affirms; a  
 " Thing of the greatest Importance, as Dr. *Owen* says;  
 " a Matter of very great Weight, as Mr. *Hill* speaks;  
 " a Concern of the last Consequence to the Churches  
 " of Christ, the very *Basis* and Foundation of the Mi-  
 " nistry, as others assert; and therefore deserving our  
 " serious Enquiry:" And, if such, it is surely a Thing  
 worthy our contending for.

Some have talked as if few but the less considerable were zealous for the People's Right; but however weak some of us are, yet there have been many, and still there are some of the most eminent for Learning, Judgment, Parts and Tenderneſs of Walk, who have been and still are for this Right, as a Privilege which Christ the King of *Zion* hath purchased for his Church and People: Witness *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Zuinglius*,  
*Bul-*

*Bullinger, Musculus, Martyr, Zanchy, Junius*, Professors of *Leyden*, *Centuriators* of *Magdeburgh*, *Voetius, Bucan, Paræus, Chemnitius, Gulther Morney, Baldwin, Waller, Blondel, Maresius, Turretine, Piçtet*: And many in our own Land, as *Knox, Calderwood, Gillespie, Rutherford*, Professors *Wood* and *Durham*: And so of many others abroad and at home, who might be particularized, Men of eminent Learning and Judgment, and of the choicest natural Endowments; as *Calvin*, to whom the Epithet of *judicious* is commonly given; so *Beza*, of whom the Author of *The modest and humble Enquiry* says, he was a *Miracle of Learning*, affirming that all the Reformed Churches paid the greatest Deference to his Sentiments; so *Cartwright*, who when Queen *Elisabeth* wrote to *Beza*, that he might write, or chuse and send her some eminently learned Person to write, an Answer to the *Rhemists Annotations* on their New Testament, it is said, *Beza* wrote back to her Majesty, that he knew not a more learned Man under the Sun than she had in her own Dominions, naming *Cartwright*. But, without insisting upon Particulars, I suppose all the forementioned Persons were Men of choice and excellent Learning, Judgment and Abilities. Beside, I know not how many others might here be named.—Here also sundry of the Ancients might have been mentioned. Sir *Peter King*, afterwards Chancellor of *Great-Britain*, makes it clear, that for the first three Centuries the People had the Election of their Ministers. So the Martyr *Cyprian*, one of the most eminent among the Fathers, in his 67th Epistle affirms, that *plebs ipsa maxime habet potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, aut indignos recusandi*; The People chiefly have the Power of chusing worthy Ministers, or refusing the unworthy; And there he, with an *African* Synod asserts, this is their Privilege by Divine Authority. That this was *Cyprian's* Judgment and Sentiment, and that it is the People's Right, is further evident from the Testimony of the learned Dr. *Peirson* Bishop of

R 2

Che-

*Chester*, who says \*, "Though *Cyprian* attributes *Te-*  
*simony* to the *Clergy*, and *elective Voice* to the *Peo-*  
*ple*; the Cardinal, on the contrary, gives elective  
 Voice to the *Clergy*, and only Testimony to the  
 People; by which means he destroys the People's  
 elective Voice, which *Cyprian* every where asserts:"  
 And there he affirms, that *Cyprian's* Words will not at  
 all bear the Cardinal's Gloss. The learned Dr. *Bar-*  
*row* also, in his *Pope's Supremacy*, Page 326, gives  
 Testimony to what is affirmed concerning *Cyprian's*  
 Judgment, and the Practice of the Church as to the E-  
 lection of Ministers in his Day.

And, which may put some Protestants to the Blush,  
 sundry *Roman* Catholicks have ingenuously acknow-  
 ledged this, that for the first three Centuries, which  
 were the purest Times of Christianity, the People had  
 this Privilege of electing their own Bishops or Mini-  
 sters. *Azorius* the *Jesuit* acknowledged this: So did  
*Rigaltius*; So the learned Historiographer *Dupin*, in  
 his *Abridgement of the Discipline* of the Church in the  
 3d. Century, gives Testimony to this: Nay, even the  
*Jesuit Bellarmine* could not for shame deny this, but  
 was forced to betake himself to this pitiful Shift, That  
 when the People enjoyed this Privilege in antient  
 Times, it was by the Condescendence of the Pope of  
*Rome*. And the learned *Bower*, who not long ago  
 was Professor of *Rhetorick, History* and *Philosophy* in  
 the University of *Rome*, in his *History of the Popes* or  
 Bishops of *Rome*, Page 100, Vol. I. says, In the pri-  
 mitive Times, for sundry Centuries, though there were  
 different Methods in chusing, yet on no Occasion was  
 the Election sufficient without the Consent of the Peo-  
 ple. And Page 361, he says, When two Persons were  
 chosen, the Emperor made a Law, at the Desire of  
*Boniface*, That when two Persons were chosen to a  
 Vacancy, neither was to hold the Dignity, but the  
 People and Clergy were to proceed to a new Election:  
 This was in the 5th Century; and he says, this is the  
 first Instance that occurs in History of Princes inter-  
 meddling with the Election of the Pope or Bishop of  
*Rome*.



*Rome.* Now, by the Clergy which were to join with the People in the Election, I humbly think the Presbyters or Elders, with the Deacons of the vacant Congregation, are meant; for as *Owen, Baxter, Clarkson, Lawder*, and others have evidenced, Bishops in the primitive Times were Pastors only of one Congregation; and when we read of Presbyters under them, the Elders of the Congregation may be meant, some of whom in those Times, with the Bishop's or Minister's Allowance, did sometimes preach, especially in the Bishop's Absence: And that which gives Countenance to this Opinion is what *Bower* says in Pag. 162, where he affirms, "The Presbyters of a Church were not confined to a set Number, but the Deacons were, no Church having more than Seven in the primitive Times, that being the original Number instituted by the Apostles:" And he says, Presbyters were often styled the *Bishops Assistants*; as he affirms, they were not ordained to any particular Church, but might serve the Church where they had received their Orders, or any other Church where their Assistance might be wanted.

*Tim.* I own my Obligations for the Pains taken in answering my last Question anent the Scripture-Arguments for the People's Right to elect their Pastors. If you can tarry, and be not fatigued already, I would yet ask another Favour, which is, That you tell me, what you think of this Affirmation, that the only Reason why our Heretors, in former Times of Presbytery, before 1690, had no more Voice in the Election of Ministers than People of meaner Circumstances, was this, because all the Heretors were then chosen for Elders, the Elders of the Congregation having the Election only before that Time.

*Iren.* For Answer to this your 4th Query, 1. I own that, generally speaking, it was so, that Heritors from 1638 were Elders; and also, I am ready to think it was so from the Reformation. But, 2. Though it was or might be so, it is most certain that no Heritor, not of our Communion, nor any non-residing Heritors, were

were Elders; and so they had no Vote in the Election. Nor was it so, that such Heretors as were of our Communion, and had their Residence in the Parish, were always made Elders; for none that were ignorant or immoral were chosen to that Office. But, 3. I heartily wish it was so still, to wit, that all Heretors were Elders; for readily, if qualified for this Office, they would be of greater Usefulness and Influence in the Session and Congregation, 4. I suppose, at this Day, it is so for the most Part, that such Heretors as are of our Communion, residing in the Parish, having the Qualifications required, are Elders, if they will but accept of the Office. And, 5. If they have the Qualifications required of Elders, both by older and later Acts of Assemblies, they being of tender Conversations, evidencing themselves to be religious, having the Worship of God daily in their Families, they should be urged to accept of that Office: Yet it is to be lamented, that many, who have come under solemn Ties and Obligations to this at their Admission, live in the total Neglect of this necessary Duty; while others mind it only on the Lord's Day, and may be seldom then.

*Tim.* I had some other Particulars to propose; but, seeing you cannot tarry, I would yet request the Favour of another short Conference with you.

*Iren.* I am content; and, if you please, let it be this same Afternoon, at Five of the Clock, at my Habitation.

*Tim.* I am much obliged for your ready Condescendence: I'll then wait on you, Farewell.

## DIALOGUE VI.

I R E N E U S.

BE pleased to take your Seat, and let me know what you have to propose at present : I cannot tarry long at this Time.

T I M O T H E U S.

You know *Seceders* are ready to exclaim against the Church of *Scotland* for the late Conduct of our Assemblies and Commissions, in censuring Ministers for not concurring in violent Settlements, thinking from that they have a strong Argument for prevailing with serious People to leave this Church, and join the *Secession*, looking on this as a sinful Term of Communion ; What can be said in Answer to them ?

*Iren.* For stopping the Mouths of *Seceders*, and satisfying serious People who may be in any Danger of joining the *Secession* on such Accounts ; 1. I grant 'tis Matter of Lamentation, that the Church of *Scotland* hath censured such honest Ministers without sufficient Ground, as I think hath been shown already, and when, in my humble Opinion, they deserved Commendation rather than Censure or Condemnation ; and for their threatening to censure others, if they refused Obedience to their Injunctions, whether they could see them to be lawful or not, I think also is Matter of Lamentation. But 2. We cannot expect a Church upon Earth without Blemishes ; this will only be when we come to the General Assembly of the First-born, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect. 3. Tho' I am not to apologize for the Church of *Scotland* in this Affair, nor, in my humble Opinion can any sufficient Apology be made for her, yet she is not to be made blacker than she is ; and it may be considered, that this Affair of *censuring* those Brethren was  
far



far from being the Deed of the whole Assemblies or Commissions : For the Vote being put, *Censure or Not*, at the Assembly 1751, it carried only by ten or twelve Votes to censure ; and when the second Vote was put anent the Nature of the Censure, whether it should only be a *Rebuke at the Assembly's Bar*, by the Moderator, or *suspend* for a Year from sitting in Kirk-Courts, there were only, according to my Information, Ten or Eleven that voted *suspend*. Such as voted against censuring, they did not vote at all in this last Question. And when that Vote to censure those Brethren was carried in the Assembly, the Reverend Principal *Wisheart*, and a good Number of the Assembly, entred their Dissent against that Sentence : And when the Sentence of the Commission in *November* last, enjoining the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under the Pain of Censure, to settle the Parish of *Inverkeithing*, was carried, the Reverend Mr. *Rob*, and sundry with him, also entred their Dissent against that Sentence.

Further, for Vindication of this Church, it may be considered, That albeit the Commission in *November* 1751 enjoined the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under the Pain of a very high Censure, to settle the Parish of *Inverkeithing* with the Candidate Mr. *R——n* on the 2d *Wednesday* of *February* 1752 at farthest ; yet the Commission which met in *March* last, upon hearing the Apology of these Brethren for their Non-obedience, they assoilzied them without the least Censure or Admonition. And when the Brethren were rebuked at the last Assembly, the Assembly did not so much as require them to confess they had transgressed, nor required any Promise that in Time coming they should guard against the like ; as their Rebuke given by the Moderator was in softer Terms. But, 4. Tho' the Assembly had not only rebuked, but suspended, yea actually deposed those Brethren, albeit that had been a sinful *Term of Communion* to those Brethren themselves, yet it had not been so to other Members of the Church, unless she was requiring that they should approve of the Assembly's Conduct in censuring those Ministers ; tho' it is to be

lamented. If a Church should be so tyrannical as to censure some of her Members unjustly, yet this hath never been judged by the judicious and tender, to be a just Cause of Separation or Secession from her: Hence judicious *Durham on Scandal*, speaking of Church Communion, says, \* “ It may also be consistent with many  
 “ particular Failings and Defects in the Exercise of  
 “ Government, as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members, yea the censuring of  
 “ some unjustly, or the Admission of some that are unfit for the Ministry, and such like; these indeed are  
 “ Faults, but they are not such as make a Church to  
 “ be no Church: And tho’ these have sometimes been  
 “ pretended to be the Causes of Schisms and Divisions  
 “ in the Church in Practice, yet were they never defended to be just Grounds of Schisms and Divisions,  
 “ but were ever condemned by all Councils and Fathers,  
 “ and cannot be in Reason sustained.----Sure there were  
 “ such corrupt Acts of all Kinds among the *Jews*  
 “ Church Officers, yet it is clear, that *Nicodemus* and  
 “ *Joseph of Arimathea* did continue to govern jointly  
 “ notwithstanding thereof, who yet cannot be accounted accessory to any of their Deeds. (And then he  
 “ adds) Because Men in such Cases have Access, even  
 “ when they are present, to discountenance such corrupt  
 “ Acts, by not consenting thereto, and testifying against  
 “ the same (yea, they may by so doing stand in the Way  
 “ of many wicked Acts, which by dividing they cannot  
 “ do) which is sufficient for their Exoneration, both  
 “ before God and Men. As we may see in the Instances of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* mentioned, who continued united in the Government, kept the Meetings,  
 “ even when Sentences passed against those who will acknowledge Christ, and Orders for persecuting him and  
 “ them; yet they are declared free, because they dissented from and testified against the same: Yea, their  
 “ Freedom and Exoneration by vertue of their Dissent,  
 “ being present, is more solemnly recorded to their

S

“ Ho-

"Honour in the Gospel, than if they had divided."

The above Citation from such a Person as Mr. *Durham*, whose *Praise is in the Churches*, being so pertinent and adapted to the present Case, though long, I have not grudged to transcribe, lest you should not have the Book by you.

Further, 6. Such as make the above Exception, pleading for *Secession* or *Separation* from this Church, because of her censuring some of her Members so unjustly, may remember how the General Assembly at *Dundee* 1651, did not only *rebuke* or *suspend*, but actually *deposed* Mr. *James Guthrie*, Mr. *James Simpson*, Mr. *Patrick Gillespie*, and I think Mr. *Gilbert Hall*, only for *protesting* against that Assembly: And yet those worthy Brethren, nor such *Protesters* as adhered to them, did not think it Duty to make a *Secession* from the Church of *Scotland* at that Day, tho' they charged the *Publick Resolutioners* with carrying on a Course of Defection at that Time.

7. As said already, I'm very far from justifying our Assemblies or their Commissions, for censuring or threatening to censure any of the Brethren for their Non-obedience in the above Cases; yet had our Judicatures come the length of delivering them to Satan, as the *Seceders* have done to some of their *Brethren*, and I know not but they were near the Half of them, for doing what they judged their Duty, there had been far more Ground to complain and secede.

*Tim.* I remember some time formerly, when speaking of its being a Popish Principle to oppose the People's Right of electing their Pastors, for which Protestants had always contended, that I asked, Whether all *Romanists* had opposed this Right? and whether all Protestants had been for it? At which Time you could not tarry to answer these Things, but said you would give Answer at any other Season, if required; and this having hitherto escaped my Memory, I now desire you may be pleased to give your Answer.

*Iren.* I remember it; and now for Answer, tho' I called it a Popish Principle to oppose the People's Right; yet



yet I acknowledge sundry learned Papists have been forced to own, that as it was the Practice in the primitive Times, from the Days of the Apostles, and downwards for many Centuries, for the People to have the Election ; so some of them have owned, that, according to the Scripture, the People have this Right : Yet, generally speaking, Papists have denied this, and Protestants maintain it.

*Tim.* Do all Protestants maintain that the People have this Right ?

*Iren.* I own some Protestants have opposed this of the People's Right to elect their Pastors ; but I do not remember that ever I saw any professed Presbyterian opposing or denying this in Writ, except the late Author of the *Modest and humble Enquiry*, tho' many of the Episcopal Perswasion in *England* have denied this ; and the less Wonder, all their Settlements there being by *Presentations* from *Patrons* ; And yet many amongst the most learned in the Church of *England* have owned, that this is the People's Right, as sundry of them have regreted, and do regrete, that the People in *England* are deprived of this Privilege.

*Tim.* Be pleased to instance, if Memory serve, some of those eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, who ever declared for the People's Right in this Affair.

*Iren.* Seeing you desire this, here I'll instance a few of many that might be particularized, as Dr. *Carleton* Bishop of *Landaff*, Dr. *Davenant* afterwards Bishop of *Salisbury*, Dr. *Hall* afterwards Bishop of *Norwich*, and Dr. *Ward* Master of *Sidney Colledge* in *Cambridge* ; all chosen by *James VI.* as Men of the soundest Principles, and greatest Learning, among the *English* Clergy, to go for Members to the Synod of *Dort* ; at which Synod they all approved of and signed the *Belgick* Confession of Faith, in the 31st Article of which the Election of Ministers is given to the Church or People. Indeed those *English* Divines at that Synod, they did oppose and protest against a Part of that same Article, viz. that Part thereof, in which it is affirmed, That " in what-  
" somever Place Ministers of the Gospel be, they have

" the same Power and Authority, all being the Mini-  
 " sters of Christ, the only universal Bishop, and only  
 " Head of the Church." They would not approve of  
 the Equality of Gospel Ministers, but they went in  
 with the rest of the Members of that famous Synod, to  
 approve of and subscribe to the Church her having the  
 Right to elect her Pastors. Again, the learned Dr.  
*Prideaux*, Regius Professor in *Oxford*, who I think was  
 Co-temporary with these Divines, he affirms, † That  
 this is the Right of the *Parishioners* originally ; for  
 having put the Question, *An vocatio Cleri Anglicani, &c.*  
*Whether the Calling or Vocation of the English Clergy to*  
*holy Orders since the Reformation be lawful ?* in answer  
 says, " They have due Election either from the King  
 " or Patrons, into whose Hand the Parishioners for  
 " eviting Confusion have delivered that Right, which  
 " they had, *quod habuerunt.*" By which Expressions he  
 clearly intimates and owns, it is the Right of *Pari-*  
*shioners*, or of the People in such or such a Parish, to  
 elect their Pastors, their Right originally, their Right  
 from Christ the Head of his Church, for they could not  
 have this Right from any else ; tho' I own it was but  
 a poor Shift to say, they had their Election from the  
 King, or any other Patron into whose Hands the People  
 or Parishioners had delivered it. Again, Archbishop  
*Whitgift* argued to the same Purpose, asserting, That  
 " the People's Right of Election was given away, with  
 " their own Consent, to the King, in Regard their Re-  
 " presentatives in Parliament consented to that Law  
 " which gave his Majesty such a Right." Such Ex-  
 pressions were a plain owning that the Right of Ele-  
 ction belonged to the People originally ; and if so, it  
 could never justly be taken from them. So the learned  
 Bishop *Stillingfleet* speaks to the same Purpose, asserting,  
 " The Liberality of the Northern Princes in endowing  
 " Churches, was Ground of their interposing in the  
 " Election of Ministers, so as to take the Power out of  
 " the People's Hand." By which Expression I humbly  
 think he owns the People's Right originally, and also  
 that

that all the Power that Princes have to interpose in the Election of Bishops or Ministers is from the People, that being their Right originally; if taken out of their Hands, this says it was their's formerly.

Also Dr. Burnet, afterwards Bishop Burnet, is forced to make the same pitiful Shift, when arguing with a Papist in Vindication of the Validity of the *English Ordinations*, † when he says, "It is well enough known, that for the first three Centuries, the Elections were made by the People, and the Bishops that came to assist in those Elections did confirm their Choice, and consecrate the Person by them elected. Now, adds he, whatever is a Right of the People, they can by Law transfer it on another: So in our Case, the People of this Realm having in Parliament annexed the Power of chusing Bishops to the Crown, by which their Right is in the King's Person, Consecrations upon his Nomination must either be good and valid, or all the Consecrations of the first Ages of the Church shall likewise be annulled, since he has now as good a Right to name the Persons that are to be consecrated, as the People then had." Here the Doctor plainly owns, That this is the People's Right originally; but then he is grossly mistaken when he says, Whatever is the Right of the People, they can by Law transfer it on another; for this we utterly refuse as to spiritual Privileges. *Esaú* is branded for a prophane Person by the Spirit of God for selling his Birthright ‡. Here People are not *sui juris*. If any incline to see more upon this Subject, they may look to *Jus Populi Divinum*, a Piece published 1727, where they may see the Judgment of *Amesius*, *Cartwright*, *Calderwood*, *Park* and *Rule*, all arguing against this Principle of transferring the Right of Election to King, to Patrons, yea or to a General Assembly, or any else.

Further, Tho' some of late speak of the People's Right to elect their Pastors, as if it were a new upstart Prin-

† Vind. of the Ord. of the Church of Engl. p. 91.

‡ Heb. 12. 16.



Principle or Doctrine; yet Bishop *Burnet*, after regretting the Slothfulness of antient Writers, that had not recorded more particularly how the Elections of Bishops were managed in *England* in antient Times, he says, "No doubt they were chosen according to the Customs that were spread over the rest of the *Roman Empire*." (*This was with the Suffrages of the People.*) He adds, "But since we find that popular Election did afterwards take Place in *England*, we have Reason to conclude It was so from the Beginning; for Power seldom returns to the People after it is once taken out of their Hands \*." And there, according to him, it was not till after the 12th Century that the People were deprived of all Part in the Elections.

Another learned Church of *England* Divine, was Dr. *Field*, who says, "Each People and Church stand free by God's Law to admit, maintain and obey no Man as their Pastor without their liking; and that the People's Election, by themselves or their Rulers, dependeth upon the first Principles of human Fellowship and Assemblies; by which Cause, adds he, tho' Bishops by God's Law have Power to examine and ordain, before any Man be placed to take the Charge of Souls, yet have they no Power to impose a Pastor upon any Church against their Will."

Again, For refreshing your Memory, I'll instance one *English* Divine more, and that is the learned Dr. *Watt*, of whom I think I once told you formerly, in his *Critical Notes on some select Places of Scripture*, a Book which was published in 1730, he on *Acts* vi. 3. says, "The Apostles would not choose the Men themselves, but left the Choice of the Men to the Body of the People: According to this Pattern, says he, the primitive Church in the Age next to the Apostles always made use of the Suffrage of the People in the Election of their Church Officers." And having given an Account of the Original of Patronages, he says, "At first those Patrons were Lawiers, which the Church  
" had

\* Right of Princes in dispos. Eccl. Benefices, p. 137.

" had chosen to defend their Rights against Enemies ;  
 " those Lawiers, adds he, in Process of Time claimed  
 " and got the Right and Power of Nomination of the  
 " Curate or Incumbent to the Parish which they served  
 " or defended ; and which is worst of all, this Right  
 " to him, his Heirs or Assignies for ever : Which tho'  
 " he were a good Man, yet his Heirs in Process of Time,  
 " or their Assignies, would be many Times some of the  
 " vilest of Men ; sometimes a prophane Atheist, some-  
 " times a Heretick, sometimes a Hater of God and all  
 " Religion, sometimes a Pettifogger, sometimes a lewd  
 " Ale-house Keeper. This is the Man that shall, in spite  
 " of the Bishop, in spite of the People, nominate the  
 " Curate to have the Care of their Souls." And there  
 he regretes, that this Right of Patronage, which  
 from *Advocatus* they call *Advocation* or *Advowson*, is  
 as saleable as a Horse in the Market. And, says he,  
 " How far are we gone from the Pattern of this Text,  
 " *Acts* vi. 3. the Example of the Apostles, and those  
 " first Christians, in choosing Officers for holy Duty."

*Tim.* I have another Desire which is, to know what  
 you think can be the Reason, why so many in the Church  
 of *Scotland*, who are engaged to stand up in Defence  
 of Presbyterian Principles, do yet stand up with so much  
 Keenness in our Judicatures for Settlements upon little  
 more than bare Presentations, and for blind Obedience,  
 which have always been reckoned Antipresbyterian Prin-  
 ciples.

*Iren.* For Answer I will not take on me to judge of  
 what is their *Πρωτον ψευδος*, or *Helena*, for which the  
 War against the Truth is commenced in these Points,  
 nor will I take on me to judge what secret Designs they  
 may have in such Conduct : Only I may say, that for  
 my Part, I cannot see what good Designs they can have  
 for the Glory of God, for the good of *Zion*, or Edifi-  
 cation of Souls ; and if the Distinction between *Inten-  
 tio operis* & *operantis* be sustained here, I'm sure the  
*intentio operis* is Evil, whatever the *intentio operantis* may  
 be. Some say their Design looks to be, that they may  
 weary out Ministers and People in their opposing Pre-  
 sentees

Sentences and their Settlements, whether they have a Call to the Work of the Gospel or not, from those among whom they are to be settled: While others with their Design in appearing so warmly for blind Obedience may not be also, that afterwards they may bring in other Corruptions into the Church with less Opposition, having after this a Precedent to plead of Inferiors their being obliged to obey the Sentences of their Superiors in General Assemblies, whether they can see them to be just, or not; having carried this Point in the General Assembly 1751, notwithstanding it was pleaded, that to obey them in such Settlements was contrary to the Word of God, to our Books of Discipline, sworn to in our National Covenant, and to sundry Acts of General Assemblies, and that such Obedience was directly contrary to our *Confession of Faith*: And what may they not carry by Vote after this? may they not vote to bring in *constant Moderators*, and by a Petition to bring in Prelacy, and for the Church to have *Vote in Parliament*? for there are many in the World who would be *Vicar of Brae* still, tho' *Mahometanism* were to come in, *having heard there are some good Things in the Alcoran*.

*Tim.* When formerly discoursing of the Obedience Presbyterians owe to the Sentences of their Superiors, you said, albeit by their Principles they are not obliged to give blind Obedience to the highest of Church Judicatures, yet by their Principles, and Ministers also by Engagements at their Ordination, are obliged to submit to their Decrees, Determinations or Sentences, tho' they should be unjust in their Esteem: Now therefore I would also gladly know whether are Presbyterian Ministers obliged, by their Ordination Engagements, to absolute Submission in all Things to superior Judicatures.

*Iren.* I once thought it might be their Duty to be subject and submissive in all Things, tho' they did not owe them blind Obedience; but upon serious Consideration, I see now there are Cases wherein I dare not say we are to submit unto them; for as their Obedience, so their Submission is only to be *in the Lord*; as Wives are

com-



commanded to submit themselves to their own Husbands, as it is fit, in the Lord, Col. iii. 18. Now, if the Husband should forbid his Wife to pray to the God of Heaven, because he was not certain whether God would be pleased with her Prayers; in such a Case I'm persuaded she was not to submit to his Injunctions, and such a Case might be.

*Tim.* I own it might be the Case with sundry; for there are some, and, alas! I fear there are not a few Husbands who never bow a Knee to God, the Hearer of Prayer, themselves; and perhaps they might give such Advice, yea Commands, to their Wives. I was lately reading the learned *Leslie* against *Deism*, and there, in the Preface to his *Easy Method with the Jews*, he says, even of the famous *Plato*, That he in his *Discourse concerning Prayer and the Worship of God* concludes, "That Men by their natural Reason cannot find out what sort of Worship will be acceptable to God, nor can be sure what they ought to pray for according to his Will; and that it were safer to forbear Sacrifices and Prayer, than to venture upon it, when that we did not know but that we might provoke God thereby, instead of pleasing him: That therefore it was necessary, they should wait till God should send some Person from Heaven to instruct them in this."

*Iren.* That was a clear Evidence of the absolute need of supernatural Revelation, in order to our serving God acceptably, and working out our Salvation-work; for if even a *Plato*, who had been Scholar to the famous *Socrates*, and who had travelled much, and studied hard, to attain Knowledge and Understanding, and was reckoned the Chief of the Academick Philosophers, and had the Epithet of *Divine* given him; if he by his natural Reason was at a *Nonplus* here, may not others despair of attaining to this without Divine Revelation. But of that *intransitu*, or in the *Bye*. And for further Answer to your Question, Tho' we are to submit in every Thing that is lawful; yet if a Church should turn so corrupt, as to evidence herself to be no Church of Christ, whether by her grossly sinful Precepts or Prohibitions,

bitions, I humbly think she is neither to be obeyed nor submitted to. The Apostles did right in refusing Submission to the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, when they charged them to *Speak no more in the Name of Jesus*. So, was a Church to prohibit her Ministers to preach against *Deism, Arianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, Arminianism, Popery*, or to do the like, then no Submission would be due unto her.

*Tim.* Before parting, If you have thought or can think of any *Corollaries* from our former Conversation about *private Judgment*, and against *blind Obedience* to the highest of Church Judicatures, or from what we have discoursed about Patronages, &c. be pleased to let me hear them.

*Iren.* You must have me excused from entring upon those at present; but, *if the Lord will*, I'll call at your Dwelling To-morrow, by Three of the Clock Afternoon, when I'll endeavour to satisfy you in that Point.

*Tim.* I am pleased with your Proposal.

## DIALOGUE

## DIALOGUE VII.

I R E N E U S.

I Have thought upon some *Corollaries* from our former Conferences, and now, according to your Desire, I'm ready to show them to you.

T I M O T H E U S.

Be pleased to let me hear them.

*Iren.* 1. I think from what hath been said for *private Judgment*, seeing it is a Principle laid down, according to the Scriptures, in our Confession of Faith, as was shown above, then all the Members of this Church, and Ministers of the Gospel in special, ought to assert, maintain, and also defend this Principle to the utmost of their Power, against all, being solemnly obliged to this by their Ordination Engagements.

2. See hence, the purest of Churches may be left to err and backslide : The Church of *Scotland*, which for Purity, Tenderness, Zeal and Orthodoxy, did excel most of the Reformed Churches formerly, *Geneva* not excepted, as *James VI.* publickly acknowledged, and seemed to glory of it, in the New Church of *Edinburgh*, before he went to receive the Crown of *England*; yet hath she erred in censuring some of her worthy Members, for not obeying her Commands, when upon serious Trial they could not see them to be agreeable to the Word of God, and known Principles of this Church; from which 'tis evident she is rather declining than advancing in Purity and true Zeal. According to Mr. *Gillespie*, she has been guilty of a triple Fault and Scandal; for in his *Treat* of *The Election of Ministers with the Congregation's Consent*, after proving it from Scripture, Reason, Antiquity, and concurring Testimonies of the Reformed Churches, with Citations from our



Books of Discipline and Acts of Parliament, that the People's Consent is necessary in the calling of Pastors, he says, "And now, if in any Congregation of Scotland the Practice shall be contrary to the Profession and Rule established (which God forbid, and I hope never shall) it were a double Fault and Scandal." Now this double Fault and Scandal is daily committed; and which is another no less Fault, Men are censured for refusing to go contrary to her former established Rule for Settlements; Backsliding with a Witness!

3. See, All that shall suffer in any Church, for refusing to act from *blind Obedience*, they suffer for a good Cause, they suffer for the Truth; as when a Church imposeth any Thing in God's Service or Worship, which wants the Stamp of Divine Authority, such they suffer for *quitting themselves*, like Men † refusing to act like Brutes; for he that to please any Mortal, acteth or goeth against his Light, or acts without Light, is *brutum agens*, a silly Soul.

4. See hence, such are highly culpable, as condemn those Brethren in the Presbyteries of *Perth*, *Linlithgow* and *Dunfermline*, who did not obey the Commands of General Assemblies and Commissions; these also who condemn all such as have stood up in their Vindication, condemning those in a special Manner that dissented from the Acts of Assembly and Commission, censuring them as being Men of divisive Spirits, and regardless of the Peace of the Church, seeing this Doctrine hath such clear Foundation in the Word of God, as hath been evidenced above. I own the *Peace of Jerusalem* is to be preferred to the *Chief or Head of our Joy* in all the World; But it is Peace with *Truth* which we are to study, and Peace may be broken in the Cause of the *Prince of Peace*. Better *Jeremiah-like* be Men of *Strife and Contention to the whole Earth*, than say a Confederacy with any in that which is evil. It is only if it be possible, that we are to live peaceably with all Men; and *Illud tantum possumus quod jure possumus*, The Wisdom which is from above is first pure, and then peace-

peaceable. What Calvin said in a Letter to the English Protestants, I think at Franckfort, is a great Truth ;  
 “ In Things of this Life we may remit so much of the  
 “ Right as the Love of Peace requireth ; but as for  
 “ the Regiment of the Church, which is spiritual, and  
 “ wherein every Thing ought to be ordered according  
 “ to the Word of God, it is not in the Power of any  
 “ mortal Man ; *Quidquam hic aliis dare, aut in illorum*  
 “ *gratiam deflectere.*”

5. See hence what Ground we have to bless and thank the Lord, that we in this Church may yet speak against, preach against, and print against this Popish Principle of implicate Faith and blind Obedience. We have Ground to bless him, no such Oath is required of our Ministers, as of the *Romish* Clergy, where they are obliged solemnly to swear, That they “ shall preserve, defend, increase and promote the Rights, Honours, Privileges and Authority of the holy *Roman* Church of our Lord, the Pope and his Successors, the — Decrees, Orders or Appointments, Reservations, Provisions or Mandates Apostolical ;—and that they shall, according to their Power, persecute and oppose all Hereticks, Schismaticks and Rebels against the said our Lord and his Successors ; and that they shall humbly receive, and diligently execute, the Apostolical Commands :”— And Time hath been, even in the Church of *Scotland*, when faithful appearing against blind Obedience hath been reckoned a great Crime ; as when it was Crime enough to take away one’s Life, if he would not act from blind Obedience, as in the Case of the renowned Earl of *Argyle*, for his explaining the *Test* ; so in those Times, when such as were licensed and ordained to preach the Gospel were obliged to swear to be obedient to their Superiors in the Church, and also sworn to be subject to all the Orders that were or should be established, as some Time it was under *Prelacy* ; so in those Times before the *Revolution*, when none durst print any Thing against Popery, or against any Popish Principle, as is the Doctrine of implicate Faith and blind Obedience. Professor *Jamieson*, in  
 Preface

Preface to his *Verus Patroclus*, or Treatise against *Quakerism*, told the Earl of *Dundonnald*, to whom he is there writing, that some Time ago he thought to have troubled him with what he now wrote, but his Papers could not be admitted to the Press without the Allowance of the publick Inspectors, by whom, says he, I was prohibited the Publication, *unless I razed out of them all Mention of Popery whatsoever*. This Book was published 1689.

6. See hence, we have Ground to bless the Lord, there is yet such a Number in the Church of *Scotland*, who have been, and still are, very opposite to this Doctrine of blind Obedience, and are true Friends to the Doctrine of *private Judgment* in all Cases. And as this Sentence for censuring the Brethren was carried by no great Majority in the Assembly, so, if this momentous Question were transmitted to Presbyteries through *Scotland* for their Judgment in the Affair of censuring in the like Case, I am humbly of Opinion it would be resolved in the Negative. And I cannot but have the Charity for sundry, who voted for censuring such Brethren in the present Case, that they would suffer much, rather than go in with the Popish Doctrine of absolute universal blind Obedience to the highest of Church Judicatures, or declare absolutely against the Doctrine of *private Judgment* in any Case; being perswaded it was from Want of Consideration, that they voted for censuring these Brethren; for as Dr. *Isaac Barrow* says, Though sometimes Church Guides or Ministers err through Pravity, so sometimes this is through Infirmitie, and sometimes it is through Passion, and I may add, that sometimes it is through Party Interest, that they err in Judgment. But, in the

7th Place, Seeing Patronages are in Danger of bringing in a corrupt Ministry, all of us need to cry to the King of *Zion*, the Lord of the Vineyard, that he would guide and direct all his Servants, as in all Cases, so particularly in the licensing and ordaining Men to preach the everlasting Gospel; that all such as are licensed or ordained may be found in the Faith, able

*Mini-*



*Ministers of the New Testament, or New Covenant, Men who will study to be the Glory of Christ, studying to know nothing in their Sermons in Comparison of Christ and him crucified, Men glorying in the Cross of Christ; preaching Peace, Peace with God, and Peace with Conscience, by Jesus Christ only, by his Righteousness and Blood, his doing and dying; as well as pressing Holiness, without which no Man can see the Lord, and pressing the moral Duties of the second Table of the Law: We are called to be earnest, that all in the Church of Scotland may be kept from espousing any unsound Principles, and particularly from all the Principles of Socinus.*

*Tim.* Was ever the Church of Scotland in Danger of being leavened with the dreadful Errors of Socinianism?

*Iren.* Principal Rule, when writing in Vindication of the Church of Scotland, in Answer to one of the Episcopal Clergy, who had published in Commendation of his Party, *that Philosophy was never better understood nor preached in Scotland, than it was under Episcopacy.* In Reply to this he says, "I thought the Commendation of a Minister had been rather to understand Christian Divinity than Christian Philosophy: But we must not wonder that Men so strongly inclined to Socinianism, speak in the Socinian Dialect, with whom Philosophy, that is the Improvement of Reason, overtoppeth Divinity, that is divine Revelation; for indeed that which goeth for Religion among some Men, is nothing but Platonick Philosophy put into a Christian Dress, by expressing it in Words borrowed (some of them) from the Bible, and the preaching of some Men is such Morality as Seneca, and other Heathens taught, only christianised with some Words. I confess this Philosophy was never much preached by Presbyterians: Yea, the Apostle disowneth it as not his Work in preaching. He (and we endeavour to imitate him) preached Christ crucified, 1 Cor. 1. 23. Not the Wisdom of this World, but the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, which even the Princes of Philosophers (as Plato, Aristotle, &c.) understood not."

8. See hence, Patronages and Presentations being a Source and Fountain whence many of our Grievances in the Church of *Scotland* do flow at this Day, such Patrons as are regardless of the Consent of the Congregations to which they do present, they will have much to answer for in the great *Audit* and Day of Accounts: Surely to take on them to elect Pastors to whole Congregations, as their Practice is unscriptural, so it is antiscritural, having no Shadow of Foundation in the Word of God, but is directly contrary to it, highly prejudicial to the Interest and Success of the Gospel, as it is an Usurpation upon the Rights of a Christian People, and an overturning of Christ's Institution, as hath been acknowledged, not only by Presbyterians, but also by sundry Writers of *Episcopal* Principles. As Patrons would evidence themselves to be of tender Consciences, they would guard against presenting any Persons to Vacancies, at least, unless they have the Consent of the People going along with their Presentations: For I am perswaded, to give a Presentation, and to urge the Settlement upon it, while the Congregation continues openly opposite to the Candidate his being settled over them, is no small Provocation. The learned *Beza*, for whose Judgment all the reformed Churches had a Veneration, in his *Confession of Faith*, Cap. 5. says, "*Nunquam receptum est, &c.*" It was never the Custom of any Christian Church already constitute, that any Man should be admitted to an ecclesiastical Office, unless he was freely and lawfully chosen by the Church particularly concerned. And therefore all that Trade and trafficking of *Presentations*, the *plenum jus* of *Patronages*, *Collations*, *Dimissions*, and other wicked Corruptions of that Nature, owe their original intirely to the Devil, tho' it is not to be doubted but there were some plausible Pretexs for their Institution at first." And in his Tractate *de notis ecclesiæ* he says of *Collations*, whether ordinary or by Devolution, they were first invented in the Devil's Kitchen, in *Satanæ coquina*, as if he judged them to be a savoury Dish to him.

And

And as Patrons would not provoke the Lord to deprive them of their secular Privileges, they would beware of having any Hand in robbing his People of any of the spiritual Privileges Christ hath bestowed upon them.

*Park*, in his Treatise against *Patronages*, P. 87. calls them an unjust and unwarrantable Usurpation, and he reckoned them one of those crying Sins by which God hath been provoked, in his Justice, to lay waste and desolate great Families. There are, says he, "many standing Monuments of God's Wrath and Displeasure against such as meddle in the Affairs of his House, without his own Warrant and Appointment; *Saul*, *Uzziah* and *Uzzah* are recorded among others, not as idle Stories, but as Warnings to Men in after Ages of the Church, not to partake in their Sins, lest they also partake in their Plagues: *Uzzah* had a much fairer and better Pretext to put his Hand to the Ark of the Lord, than any of our Patrons have for their acclaimed Privileges."

The learned Professor *Rutherford*, in his *due Right of Presbyteries*, Page 464. adduceth sundry Arguments, proving the Sinfulness of the Patron's Practice in giving Presentations, whereof the following Argument is one, "Whatever taketh away an Ordinance of Christ that is not lawful; But the Power of Patrons taketh away the Ordinance of Christ, and the free Election of the People, because the People have Power to chuse out of many, one fittest and most qualified for the Office, as is clear, *Acts* 6. 3. *Acts* 1. & ult. *Acts* 14. 23. because the Man chosen should be one of a Thousand as *Didoclaivius* or *Calderwood* says, in that learned Treatise intituled *Altare Damascenum*, P. 332." And then he cites *Calderwood*'s Words, where he says, "Nor can it be said that the Church may transfer her Right of presenting to a Patron, for that is in Effect to transfer her Power of Election, but that, saith he, the particular Church cannot do, except by the Decree of a General Assembly; neither can that Right be transferred over to a General Assembly, especially of



“ a perpetual and hereditary Right (because, as says  
 “ *Cartwright*) it is a Part of that Liberty which is pur-  
 “ chased by Christ’s Blood, which the Church can no more  
 “ alienate and dispose to another, than she can transfer  
 “ or dispose to another her Inheritance of the Kingdom  
 “ of God, to the which this Liberty is annexed.”

9. From what we have said anent Patronages, we may see, *Accepters of Presentations* without the Congregations Consent are highly culpable. Their Practice is surely scandalous; Acceptances of Presentations being the woful Spring and Source of the many lamentable Scandals which are in Congregations and Church Judicatures at this Day, as of the *Simoniackal* Pactions made between the Patron and Presentee, or between the Patron and some of the Presentee’s Friends for his Behoof; the woful Cause of all the Oppression and Concussion of honest People in Parishes, casting them out from their Possessions, if they have not Freedom to concur with the Patron’s Man; of all the Divisions and Contentions, to the occasioning of Animosities and Heart-burnings in Church Judicatures; of all the abominable Lies and Calumnies wherewith People are so ready to reproach one another; of all the sore Hearts they occasion to serious Souls in the Parish; of all the Reproach cast upon our holy Religion which follow on their Acceptance, those and the like are to be laid at their Door: Surely such they are guilty of the *crimen ambitus*, against which the primitive Church did so much exclaim and inveigh: And doth not their Conduct evidence to the World, they desire *the Oversight of the Flock for filthy Lucre*, seeking *theirs* more than *them*, and that they would be in the *Priest’s Office to eat a Piece of Bread*, regarding the Fleece more than the Flock: Hath not the Church of *Scotland*, ever since our Reformation, when Patronages were in Force, lamented over them as a *Grievance*, and hath she not once and again addressed against them as a *Grievance*: Now, if a *Grievance*, is it not a Sin, if not a Sin or sinful, why so much Complaint of them, why have we been at the Charges and Trouble to send Men 300 Miles to address  
 against

against them; and if a Sin, why do we touch, taste or handle it: The Patronage Act could do us no Harm if profest Presbyterians were stedfast. Our Government was so kind in 1719, as upon the Matter to rescind the Patronage Act, when seeking Redress of this Grievance, by declaring it was of no Force, unless the Candidate presented did formally and absolutely consent to be settled upon the Presentation. When our Friends in Parliament had obtained the Addition of that Clause to the Patronage Act, Patronage was looked upon as an empty Title, and as given up for dead in this Church; yea, and as one says, it remained as dead and buried for some Years after that, till the Method of Acceptances, and the Encouragement given it by our *Commissions* of Assembly, wrought its Resurrection, and eluded the very Intention of the Legislature in that Act of Limitation of the Date 1719. Any that incline to see more of the Evil of the *Acceptance* of Patronages, may see them at great Length, in that excellent little Piece, entituled, *The Case of accepting Presentations considered*, published 1732.

In the 10. Place, we may see such Ministers, Elders, or others, as plead for Settlements upon little more than bare Presentations for a Call, or when the Body of the Congregation is openly opposite, they are to be condemned, and in my humble Opinion, they are condemned by the Word of God, as *Exod. 23. 2. Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil, neither shalt thou speak in a Cause to decline after many to wrest Judgment.* Our 32 Assembly, which met at *Edinburgh* 1575, declared against Advocates their pleading before them \*, *for any Man.* But without dipping into that Question, 'tis certain many an Hour is spent in our General Assemblies to small Advantage, while one Advocate affirms one Thing from the *Corpus Juris*, or from the *Canon Law*, and another the contrary, of which the generality in our Judicatures are not capable to judge, nor obliged

U 2

to

\* Row's History of our Acts of Assembly from 1558 to 1637.

to search into, nor to know such Things. They tell of the famous Judge *Hales* his Father, that he forsook the Office of being a *Council* or *Advocate*, because he had not Freedom to plead in Causes, unless in his Opinion they were just. *Reward hath often blinded the Eyes of the Wise, and perverted the Words of the Righteous*, occasioning their uttering Words unsuitable to the Character of righteous Men.

And, as to pervert Justice and Judgment, whether in Civil or Ecclesiastical Courts, is a hainous Sin, so such as plead for this they are Partakers with the Judges in their Iniquity, and the Lord is said to be *the Avenger of all such as defraud or oppress their Brother* in any Matter, whether it be Civil or Ecclesiastick, in Things relating to their Souls or Bodies. Surely no Man ought to engage to open his Mouth in another's Cause, till once he understands it, and if, upon searching it out, he judgeth it to be bad and unjust, he ought not to plead for it as just or a good Cause, we are never to call Good Evil, nor Evil Good: And such I think are especially culpable here, as plead for Transportations upon Presentations, when in my humble Opinion, the Law or Act of Parliament for Patronages gives not the least Countenance to such Settlements.

*Tim.* Be pleased to tell me, what are the Words of the Act of Parliament on which you build your Opinion?

*Iren.* In 1719 the Parliament enacted, " That if any  
 " Patron shall present any Person to a vacant Church  
 " from and after the first of *June* 1719, who shall not  
 " be qualified by taking and subscribing the said Oath  
 " (*that is the Abjuration*) in Manner foresaid, or shall  
 " present a Person to any Vacancy, who is then, or  
 " shall be Pastor or Minister of any other Church or  
 " Parish, or any Person who shall not accept or declare  
 " his Willingness to accept of the Presentation and  
 " Charge to which he is presented, within the said  
 " Time (to wit of six Months) such Presentation shall  
 " not be accounted any Interruption of the Course of  
 " Time



“ Time allowed for the Patron to present ; but the *jus devolutum* shall take Place as if no such Presentation “ had been offered, any Law or Custom to the contrary “ notwithstanding.” Now, as if the Patron present a Man that is not qualified by taking and subscribing the *Abjuration Oath*, or a Person that is not *willing to accept of his Presentation*, his Presentation in such Cases is not to be accounted valid in Law to hinder the *jus devolutum* ; so to me from the Words of that Act it is equally plain and evident, if his Presentation be given to one who is a Pastor or Minister to any other Church or Parish, that Presentation is not valid to hinder the *jus devolutum* ; this to me, and to many more judicious, is as plain as two and three make five. And such as are well acquainted with the *English* Laws, as particularly the Bishop of *Bangor*, they tell us, “ We are not “ to enquire after *Grounds* or *Foundations* of Laws, or “ any Thing but what is expressly required in them ;” asserting that “ the Law expects nothing but what it “ requires, and requires nothing but what it expressly “ and in distinct Words requires :” So that only plain Words and plain Expressions are to be regarded in this Case, and if so, no actual Minister settled in a Parish has any Right or Title to a Presentation, and no Judicature Ecclesiastical or Civil ought to trouble themselves with such Presentations. And was there not too great a Fondness for Presentations among some of us, the Church of *Scotland* might be free from all Vexation by many if not most Presentations : Surely from all Vexation by Presentations to such as are already fixed in Parishes.

*Tim.* But is not that a condemning of Transportations, and a stakeing or nailing down a Minister to a Congregation, when there may be just Ground for his being transported ?

*Iren.* Far from it, Transportations may be very needful for the greater Good of the Church, and very necessary in many Cases : But no Church Judicature upon Earth has a Power, by the Law of Christ, to transport a Minister, so as to thrust him in upon another Congregation,

gregation, *invito grege*, or over the Belly of a Christian People, who are willing to have and chuse a Gospel Minister to take the Oversight of their Souls. Let such Ministers as may be in a bad Situation have an Act of Transportability, and upon a Call by another Parish or People let him be settled among them; but in no Case is he to be crammed down their Throat. And as there is no Law of Christ, so there is no Civil Law among us, for his being transported, tho' he should have an Hundred Presentations, till once he have a Call from the People of another Congregation.

*Tim.* To speak against *Patronages*, *Presentations* and *Presentees*, is not that to arraign the Legislature and Laws of the Nation?

*Iren.* To that I answer, 1. That what I have just now said, is not to speak against, but to plead for, an Act of Parliament, to which I humbly think our Ecclesiastical Judicatures pay not that Regard they might and ought. And 2. As to the Act for Patronages, I answer with the Bishop of *Bangor*, in his *common Right of Subjects defended*, P. 3. where he says, "'Tis so far from being  
" a Crime or an Affront to a Legislature, to shew the  
" evil Consequence, or Unequitableness of any Law  
" now in being; that all Law-Makers, who act upon  
" the Principle of publick Justice and Honour, cannot  
" but esteem it an Advantage to have such Points laid  
" before them. And for myself (*adds he*) I shall ever,  
" I hope, esteem it as great an Honour to contend a-  
" gainst debasing any of Christ's Institutions into po-  
" litical Engines, as others can do to plead on the Side  
" of an Act of Parliament." And for a Subject simply to tell wherein he thinks a Law, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical is amiss, if I be not far mistaken, can never justly be condemned, nor give Offence to any.

In the 11. Place, you may see such as concur in violent Settlements where the Congregation is openly opposite, they are very unlike our worthy Presbyterian Ancestors, even when Patronages were in Force: For as was shewn from that little Tractate of Mr. *Alexander Henderson's*, the Church of *Scotland* did not formerly  
ferle

settle Ministers *reclamante ecclesia* or over the Belly of the Congregation; such Settlements are not to be countenanced.

*Tim.* Do you think it enough to unminister a Person that he hath joined in a Settlement upon a Presentation, over the Belly of a Congregation?

*Iren.* I do not say, That this alone is sufficient to unminister a Person, nor for People to cast at his Ministry either, tho' to me that is a Fault, but every Fault in a Minister is not Ground of Deposition, and to forsake one's Ministry, is little less in sundry Cases than to vote for his Deposition: I have the Charity for some that have concurred in such a Settlement, that they did it out of a good Design, judging, if the like to that was not done, it might provoke the Government to bind the Act for Patronages faster upon us: However, we are never to do Evil that Good may come, nor to do the least of Evils to prevent a greater; yet good Men may act differently from different Light sometimes, as *Acts* 15. 39. in the Case of *Barnabas* and *Paul*: And I have the Charity for some who have been thus faulty, that if it was to do, they would not do it *pro secundo*.

In the 12. Place, Presentations and violent Settlements, by them producing such fatal Effects, surely all that wish well to the Church of *Scotland* should, as carefully to guard against countenancing violent Settlements; so also in my humble Opinion, Ministers and Elders they ought cordially to join in addressing King and Parliament of new, that the Act *Decimo Annæ* in favours of Patronages may be rescinded, telling the Government, as did the Commission 1711, That Patronages are contrary to our Church Constitution, and also to the Security given to this Church, and ratified by both Parliaments, at the uniting of the Crowns. Then the Queen was less friendly to the Church of *Scotland*, partly for Ministers favouring the *Hanoverian Succession* so much; yet now, which speaks Encouragement again to address, we have a gracious Sovereign upon the Throne, whom we have Ground to hope,  
upon



upon our renewed Application, will be friendly. The granting this Favour takes no Money from the Government. Some indeed tell us, this is what we can never expect, Presentations being so serviceable. But may we not think this is an uncharitable Thought. Let Men talk what they will, the Law of God, sound Reason, a solemn Treaty, yea, and King *George* his Interest, do all plead for this; Patronages and violent Settlements cooling in some Measure the Affections of the best Friends to the Government, thinking they are deprived of their just Rights, which, they say, all had Ground to think were secured to the Church of *Scotland* to future Generations. And I hope there is no Ground to fear the *landed Interest* interpose against us here; for they may see, if Men are once to be settled upon bare Presentations, as now, 'tis too likely, the Gentry or Nobility will be little more regarded in Elections than the *Commonalty*, as may be seen in a late Case not far from the *Metropolis* of this Kingdom. And we may hope the Bishops in *England* cannot make Opposition to this either, considering how some of themselves have lamented, and do lament, that Patronages are so naturalized with their Constitution, that be the Person presented never so weak, or worthless, unless they'll run the Risk of a *Premunire*, they must ordain the Candidate presented by the Patron, unless they shall prove him erroneous or scandalous in his Conversation, as Bishop *Burnet* shows in his *Dying Advice*s; who lamented that it was so.

In the *last Place*, See how much Ground all of us have to be weightd with the Case of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, pleading God may heal all our Backslidings, put an effectual stop to all our Defections, and revive his own Work. As told above, some have said, That Day in which private Judgment is destroyed, that Day the Protestant Religion dies; so I may say, If once this be the stated Principle of our General Assemblies, that we are to be subject and obedient to all their Decisions, whether we can see them to be just or not, we have Ground, just Ground, to fear that Day the Church of *Scotland* is utterly ruined: For if she may enjoin

enjoin to blind Obedience in one Thing, why not in another; and if she may enjoin to do that which both Church and State has formerly declared to be contrary to the Word of God, as in the Case of settling Ministers without the Consent of the People, what may she not enjoin? May she not enjoin, that the *Book of Wisdom*, the Writings of *Plato*, *Seneca*, *Socrates*, *Antoninus*, *Cicero*, &c. are to be read in publick Assemblies; and equally regarded with the sacred Oracles? How soon this Church may turn as corrupt as the Apostate Church of *Rome*, who knows; we have no absolute Security against this: If we shall wa'k willingly after the *Commandments of Men*, a holy righteous God may be provoked to break us in Judgment, so as to put Darkness for Light and gross Errors for Truth; tho' we are yet to hope for better Things: And there is yet Hope in *Israel's* Saviour concerning us, Ground to hope, that if we return to the Most High we shall be built up; for the *Residue of the Spirit is with him*, and when he pleaseth a Nation is born at once. He that hateth putting away, says to us, *Return, O backsliding Children, for I am married unto you*, Jer. iii. 14, 15. He knows by whom, and how to make *Jacob* arise when small or brought low.

*Tim.* There is one Thing more, anent which, before parting, I desire to know your Sentiments, and that is, in relation to the Church of *Scotland* her appointing of publick solemn Fasts; for I find it is a general Complaint among serious People, that they are like to turn in Desuetude, tho' perhaps there was never more Ground for Fasting and Humiliation than at this Time.

*Iren.* I own your Observation is just; and some of us may remember our Fault with Grief this Day, in that we have not moved in this Affair, *Joel* i. 13, 14. and again *Joel* ii. 15, 16, 17. There we find the Lord, in a Day like ours, he calls upon the *Priests to sanctify a Fast*, and call a solemn Assembly, to gather the *Elders*, and all the *Inhabitants of the Land*, into the House of the Lord their God, to cry unto the Lord. As the Civil Magistrate may call the *Inhabitants of a Land* to this so-

leinn Duty, as did King *Jehoshaphat* and the King of *Nineveh*; so upon their Appointments, if for *just and necessary Causes*, all the Inhabitants of the Land are called cordially to join in the Duty: So also may the Ministers and Office-bearers in the Lord's House call to this, as in former Times it hath been the commendable Practice of the Church of *Scotland*, appointing the Duty, particularizing the Causes, and naming the Day for this extraordinary Duty; and that I humbly think the Church of *Scotland* is called to do at this Juncture.

*Tim.* Seeing you speak of particularizing the Causes, what judge you to be proper and seasonable Causes of Fasting at this Time?

*Iren.* The Causes, alas! are many, and so evident, that they who run may read them. But that is a Subject larger than now I can enter upon.

And so much in Answer to your Requests and Queries. Praying, That he who can *turn the barren Wilderness to a fruitful Field*, that he who can make the dead and dry Bones to live, that he by whom a Nation is born at once when he pleaseth, may revive his Work among us, may heal all our Backslidings, may effectually purify all the Sons of *Levi*, making them able Ministers of the New Testament; that he may rebuke a Spirit of Profanity, Immorality, Formality, Lukewarmness, Division and Error; preventing in all Time coming what may look like a lording it over God's Heritage; putting an effectual Stop to all violent Intrusions; praying, that *Zion's King* may yet appear in his Glory, not only in his Sanctuary, but in all the Judicatures of his House, making his *Zion to look out as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners*; I bid you heartily Adieu.

A D D E N D A:



## A D D E N D A:

O R,

Things to be added.

## A D D E N D U M I.

**R**EADER, at Page 5, Line 25, add, Our Divines assert, That *non obedire* is not Contempt, but *nolle obedire*, or *superbiendo repugnare*. Mr. Gillespie, on *Cer.* p. 34. says, *Parker* on the *Cross* hath shewn this from the *Fathers*, *Councils*, the *Canon Law*, *Schoolmen*, and *modern Divines*.

## A D D E N D U M II. on Page 13, Line 33.

Some have said, they would have been against appointing such Brethren to settle Ministers as declared they had not Freedom to concur in Settlements where the People of the Congregation were opposite; but now, when the Thing has been enjoined, and they have not obeyed the Assembly's Sentence, they think they should be censured, lest our Constitution should be ruined, and the Authority of our supreme Judicature be trampled upon. But I answer:

The not censuring of those Brethren for Non-obedience could not or cannot overturn, or do the least Hurt to our Church Constitution, nor make People slight any of her lawful Commands in Time coming, more than it hath been or is a ruining of our *Civil Constitution*, when the Command of the Civil Government, King and Parliament, is not obeyed; as frequently the Case hath been, and yet no Punishment inflicted. Wise Rulers have often seen it best for securing the Government and Constitution, to exercise  
Le-

Lenity, forbearing the inflicting of the Censure or Punishment threatned in the Law: As when our Government, in and about the 1712, judged it best not to execute the Law against such Ministers as had not Freedom to take the *Abjuration Oath*. Again, when the Peace in Queen Anne's Time was concluded with *France*, and a solemn Thanksgiving appointed for that Peace, a great many of our Ministers had not Freedom to keep it, judging it to be an unjust Peace; yet the Government did wisely forbear to inflict Punishment upon those who had not observed it. Again, when the Government enjoined the Reading the Act anent Captain *Porteous*, our Rulers did not judge it advisable to put the Law in Execution against such as did not continue to read that Act every Lord's Day for a whole Year, as required, nor against such as did not read it at all, I know not, whether the Half of the Ministers in *Scotland* obeyed either of these three Acts of Parliament: I am sure the Half of them did not obey some of them; yet such as refused Obedience in those Cases, though they were never punished for refusing Obedience, they always were, and still such of them as are alive, continue to be, as loyal Subjects, having as great a Regard to Civil Authority, and other Acts of Parliament, as any in *Britain*. Must our Ecclesiastical Laws be like the Laws of the *Medes and Persians*, which altered not, however unjust?

The exercising of Lenity endears a Government, more than Severity, especially where Conscience is concerned. Such may be, and many Times have been, the truest Friends to a Church, who could not yield Obedience to some of her Commands, judging them to be contrary to the Law of God. It was a Saying of *Cyrus*, That he looked upon mine as good Servants, and faithful Subjects, but such as had a Sense of Religion, and a Reverence for the Deity. Such as dare not do many Times what others do in Obedience to Church or State, are the best and truest Friends to both. I hope there are no truer Friends in *Scotland* to the State, and also to our Church Constitution, in Doctrine, Wor-  
ship,

ship, Discipline and Government, founded upon the Word of God, Books of Discipline, Acts of Assemblies, and our Confession of Faith, than are those that have refused Obedience in the present Case, with such as are friendly to their Cause, being against all censuring of them in this Case,

#### ADDENDUM III. Page 17, Line 15.

The old tender *Puritan* Ministers in *Queen Elizabeth's* Time, who had not Freedom to conform to the *English* Ceremonies, in Obedience to the Church and State, did not think it Duty to leave, and go out from the Society of the Church of *England*, foregoing her Privileges, till thrust out by Force and Violence. Hence *Parker*, who was one of them, in his *Treatise on the Cross*, in Answer to their Opposites, who objected that they were regardless of their Ministry and Flocks, seeing they did not comply with Orders enjoined, says, Page 187, "Unless our Opposites would have us resist, thereby to shew ourselves willing to keep our Ministry, I see not what they can require more than we have done. What goodly Means have we omitted, which are lawful for us in the Fear of the Lord? Have we not sued, and that with Tears? have we not written, and that with invincible Arguments? have we not made our Appeals, which against all Equity are barred? have we not also kept Possession, until by Force we have been pulled out?" So surely we are to stay in the Society of the Church, contending against what may be amiss in her, as long as we can be allowed without joining in any Thing which is sinful, contributing our Mite to what is good, opposing what is evil.

#### ADDENDUM IV. for Page 21. Line 29.

In 1640, the Representative Bodies of the whole *English* Clergy, namely the two *Convocations* of *Canterbury* and *York*, did meet, at which Time they declared for



for the King's being vested with a supreme Power, declaring also that he is not, upon any Account, to be resisted. Their Words are, "The most high and sacred Order of Kings is of Divine Right, being the Ordinance of God himself, founded in the prime Laws of Nature, and clearly established by express Texts both of the Old and New Testaments: A supreme Power is given to this most excellent Order by God himself in the Scriptures, &c." And a little after they say, "For Subjects to bear Arms against their Kings, offensive or defensive, upon any Pretence whatsoever, is at least to resist the Powers which are ordained of God. And though they do not invade, but only resist, St. Paul tells them plainly, *They shall receive to themselves Damnation* †." And afterwards the whole Body of the *English* Clergy were required to preach that Doctrine, yea, and also they were obliged to subscribe unto it. The Parishes in *England* are reckoned to be about 10,000: Now I would ask, upon Supposition 4,900 Ministers should not have had Freedom to have subscribed or preached that Doctrine, nor complied with those Injunctions, which I am sure were irrational, unscriptural, yea antiscritptural Doctrines and Injunctions; Whether were those 4,900 obliged to have left the Society of the Church of *England*, and gone out from all her Privileges? Or, whether, in Obedience to such Commands, was the *English* Clergy obliged in Conscience to obey their Superiors? Their Doctrine and Practice was a plain Condemning of all *Parliaments* and *Revolution* Principles:—Or, if our Church was left so far as to enjoin all her Ministers to read the *Book of Sports* upon the Lord's Day from the Pulpit, as were the *English* Clergy, Whether they, for refusing to obey them in that Case, would be obliged to go out from the Society of the Church, foregoing all her Privileges? and whether would the Church have just Power to censure for Disobedience, though they should declare they had not Freedom, in that Case, to obey the Church? I cannot but think *Wren* Bishop of *Nor-*

† Pierce Vind. of Dissen. p. 187, 188, 314.

*Norwich* was highly culpable, though superior to the Clergy of his Diocese; when he censured them, so as to suspend, silence and deprive, as he did a great many of them, for not reading that *Book of Sports*, and for praying with *conceived* Prayer before and after Sermon; censuring them so, that they could not be absolved without giving Promise to conform to his Directions, *editis & edendis* \*. What will not corrupt Clergymen do? This was a plain binding his Clergy to blind Obedience to all his Injunctions, however cross they might be to the Word of God, or to the wholesome Laws of the Land: No Antichristian *Pope of Rome* could have required more. And to censure Brethren for their Non-obedience in the present Case, is a giving too much Countenance to such like persecuting Practices. Were Ministers to be ruled by human Laws, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, without regard to the Law of Christ, they might be obliged to preach one Thing this Year, and the very reverse the next; like the *English* Clergy, who preached this Year in Obedience to Ecclesiastical Authority, that *the King is never to be resisted in any Case whatsoever, under Pain of eternal Damnation*; and yet preached the very opposite Doctrine after, when they saw their own Danger, in the Reign of *James II.*

*A D D E N D U M* V. for Page 38, Line 10.

The learned *Pierce* also, and other *English* Writers, take the Election of Ministers for a Part of the *Discipline* of the Church; when speaking of the *English* Clergy he says †, “ We are here especially to observe  
“ how those Rectors or Vicars come by their Parochial  
“ Cures, according to the *Discipline* of the Church of  
“ *England*. The Parishioners in a very few Places  
“ have that Power, which *Cyprian* says belongs chiefly  
“ to the People, of *choosing worthy Priests, or refusing*  
“ *those that are unworthy*. If a new Rector is to be  
“ placed in the Parish, the Patron of the Living writes

\* *Pierce Vind. of Dissen.* p. 189. † *Idem.* Page 562.

" a Letter to the Bishop, and recommends what Clergy-  
 " man he pleases, to be put into it; the Bishop cannot  
 " refuse the Person thus recommended; and so the Pa-  
 " rishioners, whether they will or no, are committed  
 " to the Care of that *Presbyter*, chosen by a Stranger,  
 " and, it may be, a notoriously wicked Person. It  
 " might, perhaps, seem incredible abroad, if I should  
 " assert, that in the Church of *England*, which, as they  
 " boast themselves, is the best reformed Church in the  
 " *World*, whose present State of Discipline, say they,  
 " is not a jot inferior to the compleatest Rules of other  
 " Churches, the Right of Patronages is bought and  
 " sold; and that it is not reckoned Simony, or any  
 " Crime at all, for a Person to buy that Right, or the  
 " next Presentation of a Living, provided it be not void  
 " at the Time: Hence ignorant Fellows, if they are  
 " but rich, often get the fattest Livings." And then  
 he tells how Bishop Burnet, in his *Pastoral Care*, Page  
 26th complains grievously of such like Things.

#### ADDENDUM VI. for Page 51, Line 15.

*Iren.* Another Argument against censuring such Bre-  
 thren is, That to censure them is plain *Persecution* in  
 this Case, they having declared they had not Freedom  
 to yield Obedience to the Assembly's Command, and  
 we have no Ground to doubt of their Sincerity.

*Tim.* What call you *Persecution*?

*Iren.* I'll give you a Description of it in the Words of  
 Mr. *Samuel Bold* a conforming Minister of the Church  
 of *England*, in a Sermon of his from *Gal* 4. 29, to  
 which is added a Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters,  
 &c. This Sermon was preached and published 1683,  
 where P. 6, he says, " Persecution is an endeavouring  
 " to trouble, molest, disturb, kill, or any Way hurt and  
 " injure another Person on some religious Account."  
 And there he adds, " Persecution is much-what the same  
 " in Religion, that Oppression is in Civils, when Men  
 " will not suffer others to enjoy that Liberty, and those  
 " Rights in Religion, which either Nature or Revela-  
 " tion



"tion do allow them, but will be severe against them,  
 " if in every accidental Matter they will not be just  
 " of their Mind;----- because they either perform some  
 " Duty God has expressly commanded in a Way they  
 " do not approve, or because they will not consent  
 " to embrace and comply with those Determinations  
 " they have just Reason to believe are sinful." Now  
 those Brethren believe the Determination of the Assem-  
 bly, enjoining them to concur in settling Ministers over  
 the Belly of Christian Congregations, to be sinful; and  
 therefore 'tis Persecution to censure them for refusing  
 Obedience in the present Case. Our Lord hath pro-  
 nounced them *blessed who are persecuted for Righteous-*  
*ness sake: Princes, says David, have persecuted me with-*  
*out Cause.* To punish those Brethren, in my Opinion,  
 is to do it without just Cause; and was I to have any  
 Hand in censuring them, I would think there might be  
 just Ground to fear a righteous God might *render Tri-*  
*bulation* to me, when they that *are troubled* should have  
 sweet Rest with Christ and his Saints, *when the Lord*  
*shall be revealed from Heaven.* Christ's Servants must  
 not be *Beaters* nor *Smiters* of their *Fellow Servants*,  
 lest their Lord come in a Day when they look not for  
 him, and at an Hour when they are not aware, &c.  
*Luke xii. 45, 46.*

**ADDENDUM VII.** for Page 68, Line 10.

Perhaps, it will be said, the Church of Scotland is  
 not for binding to blind Obedience in all Things, but  
 only in this Particular of *obeying the Sentences of Ge-*  
*neral Assemblies; or superior Church Judicatures.* It  
 may be answered, Allow her this Authority and Power,  
 why not also in other Things? If they have Authori-  
 ty to demand Obedience in this Particular, I see not  
 but they have as much Authority to require Obedience  
 in other Things.—What Sentence may they not com-  
 mand us to put in Execution? Give ready Obedience  
 to them in this, who can tell what they shall enjoin  
 next Meeting? They say, *All the winning or losing of*  
 Y *a good*

a good Conscience is in the first buying: *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*; "Rome, as says the Bishop of Bangor", was not built in a Day. The *spiritual Wickedness* which now reigns in her *high Places* was the Work of Time, and arrived at the present Pitch by slow Steps; the *People* were led on gradually to their own Ruin. It was first tried what would be the Effect of denying them their Right of judging for themselves in some Affairs relating to *Religion*, whilst it was allowed them in *others*. The Use of the Scriptures was long left to them, and every Man left to make the *best* of his *Bible*, with the Addition of useful *Restraints* and *Directions*. But this would not do the Work effectually: If a Right were allowed in *part*, it was a shrewd Suspicion that it ought to have been allowed in the *whole*; if the *People* might justly judge for themselves in one Point, it was a thousand to one but this would make them apt to do it, whenever they should see fit in *others*: And therefore this Right was expressly, wholly and openly denied to them; and for Fear they should ever think of claiming their own *Supremacy in their own Behalf*, for their own private Conduct, it was translated into other Hands, where it remained guarded with the *Thunders and Lightnings* of this World." I leave the Application to you: Allow an Inch, and you may lose an Ell, and at some further Length you may bid *Adieu* to all; and Superiors their *sic volo sic jubeo* must be the *suprema lex*.

ADDENDUM VIII. Page 75, Line 18.

Wickliff, that eminent Servant of Christ, who lived before *Luther* or *Calvin*, whose orthodox Doctrines were condemned by the corrupt Council of *Constance* after his Death, whose Bones they ordered to be digged out of his Grave and burnt, he taught, *That it is not lawful to use, learn or teach any other Law than that of Christ*; denying, that it was lawful for *Christians*,  
after

\* Com. Right of Sub. defen. p. 137.

after the full Publication of the Law of Christ, to devise any other Laws for the Government of the Church. According to him, it is the Law of Christ alone which is to be our Rule in Things relating to his Church.

ADDENDUM IX. Page 92, Line 22.

*Tim.* I suppose those *English* Divines have all been *Low Churchmen*.

*Iren.* Not so. Sundry of them were zealous for the *High Church*, as particularly Mr. *Charles Leslie*, who was as much for the Doctrine of *private Judgment* as was Dr. *Hoadley*, who was of *Low Church* Principles. Their Words already cited evidence this; and to confirm you in the Truth hereof, namely, that Men of the greatest Repute in both have been and are of the same Principle, here I'll add a remarkable Citation from each of them. The learned Mr. *Charles Leslie*, in his *Dissertation concerning private Judgment and Authority*, says, "For let any Man talk what he will, and think  
" never so much that he has abandoned his private  
" Judgment, yet it is not in his Power while he remains a Man; it is inseparable from human Nature;  
" it cannot be utterly extinguished, though some have  
" so defaced it, that it is hardly visible." Dr. *Hoadley* again, when *Sherlock* Dean of *Chichester*, his Opposite, had asserted that *the People of England were bound to Communion with that Church*, and had added these Words, "so bound, I mean, that nothing but a Perswasion of Errors and Corruptions in the Church  
" could excuse a Separation from it," he, namely Dr. *Hoadley*, says, "Here we see, that the Authority in  
" Governors to add *Restraints* cannot be maintained,  
" longer than through one Sentence, that the *Supremacy* of this *private Perswasion* in every *Christian* is  
" his only *final Restraint* in these Matters; and his  
" own Right to *judge* is declared by the *Dean*, even  
" in those very Cases in which he declares Authority  
" has Power to restrain him." Then he says that which is very remarkable, "And let him try it a  
thousand



“ thousand Times over, when he has more Leisure  
“ upon his Hands, and I will venture to say, if he will  
“ speak plainly upon the Rights of *Protestants* and  
“ *Christians*, even after all the *Governments* of the  
“ Earth be supposed to agree in one Church, and that  
“ a very good one; that he will in some Place or other  
“ drop a *Salvo* for the *People*, and effectually *vest* in  
“ every Man, in his own *Behalf*, a *Supremacy* above  
“ all the *Authority* and *Restraints* of all human Go-  
“ vernments or human Determinations.” There you  
see high and low Churchmen have declared to the same  
Purpose for private Judgment, against the Determina-  
tions of all Superiors or Churches that are, have been,  
or can be in the World; and that no Man exercising  
his Reason, weighing Things seriously, if he shall speak  
his real Sentiments, but will be against blind Obedience,  
and for the Exercise of *private Judgment* in every  
Thing which concerns Religion.

500 57

E I N I S

“ never so much that he has abandoned his private  
“ Judgment, yet it is not in his Power while he re-  
“ mains a Man; it is inseparable from human Nature;  
“ it cannot be utterly extinguished, though some have  
“ so desired it, as it is hardly visible.” Dr. Hooker  
again, when speaking of *Churches*, his Opposite  
had asserted that *Churches* were bound to  
“ maintain such *Discipline*, and had added these  
“ Words, “ to bound, I mean, that nothing but a For-  
“ feiture of Errors and Corruptions in the Church  
“ could excuse a separation from it,” he, namely Dr.  
“ Hooker, says, “ Here we see, that the Authority in  
“ Government to add Restraints cannot be maintained  
“ longer than through one Sentence, that the *Law*  
“ of the *Church* is *positive* in every Christian is  
“ his only final Right in these Matters; and his  
“ own Right to Judge is declared by the *Law*, even  
“ in those very Cases in which he declares Authority  
“ has Power to restrain him.” Then he says that  
“ which is very remarkable, “ And let him say it  
“ himself

X

